

**Motorised Mobility Devices**  
Safe Skills Fact Sheet 2

## Crossing roads in your motorised mobility device

Operating your mobility scooter or powered wheelchair safely in the community is important. This fact sheet summarises the skills you have learned from your occupational therapist and provides a reminder of the main things to consider when you are interacting with motor vehicles and other road users while crossing roads.

Motorised mobility device users can experience road trauma in these environments, so safety is a top priority.

The first fact sheet in this series explains general operation of your device.

Additional information about using your device safely, including around other pedestrians and road users and on shared pathways is found in the fact sheet – *Safe use of your motorised mobility device*.

Information about applying these skills when using public transport is found in the fact sheet – *Using your motorised mobility device on public transport*.

These additional fact sheets can be downloaded from the VicRoads website.

### Safety first

- Be seen - dress in light coloured clothing to help drivers/riders to see you and use your lights in overcast weather or at dusk. Make sure your lights are clean.
- Make sure you are sitting correctly in your device: moving up/down ramps will test your balance when sitting.
- Check that your bags/loads are secure.
- Do not use a mobile phone at any time while you are moving in your device.
- Travel at a consistent speed suitable for your surroundings, the weather and light conditions, and pedestrians and vehicles in your vicinity.
- Be particularly careful if you are crossing roads with tram or train tracks as wheels can get caught in the tracks.
- At intersections, be particularly alert for vehicles completing a right turn into the road you are crossing: this is a high risk environment for all pedestrians.



## 5 steps to crossing the road safely

Crossing the road in a mobility scooter or powered wheelchair can be challenging and will require considerable planning and practice. Following are the FIVE main steps and considerations for crossing the road safely. Remember, it is important to plan the steps involved every time you cross a road and to always select the safest intersection for crossing. Sometimes this may mean travelling further to find a safer crossing point.

### STEP 1 Select an appropriate crossing point:

- Pedestrian crossings and intersections controlled by traffic lights are usually safe places for you to cross.
- T-intersections that are not controlled by traffic lights can be difficult to cross. They are often busy, and traffic can approach from multiple directions.
- Roundabouts can also be difficult places to cross. Scooter and powered wheelchair users, as well as other pedestrians, are required to give way to all other moving vehicles. Drivers/riders are usually looking for other moving vehicles at the roundabout and may not be aware of mobility device users or other pedestrians waiting to cross.
- Avoid stopping on traffic islands unless they are wide enough to accommodate the whole device. No part of the device should be on the roadway. If narrow traffic islands cannot be avoided, practise will be needed to build up skills and hazard awareness.
- Only cross the road where there is good visibility for both yourself and vehicle drivers/riders. Cross on a straight section of road, rather than on a bend or the crest of a hill where your visibility of oncoming traffic is poor and vehicle drivers/riders may not see you.
- Look ahead to the other side of the road before you commence your crossing: inspect the condition of the road, kerb ramps– avoid crossing in places where there are potholes or uneven surfaces.
- Check the condition of the cross-over and the angle of the kerb ramp to make sure it is appropriate to use and not too steep or blocked by cars.
- Choose a crossing point where you can cross directly from one side to the other (the shortest route), not at an angle.
- Avoid crossing roads in between parked cars: you will not be visible to drivers/riders and drivers may collide with you if they are emerging/entering a carpark.

### STEP 2 Position yourself at the kerb:

- Approach the kerb and position the device so that it is facing straight ahead (at a 90-degree angle to the crossing point). The exact position will depend on the kerb angle and requires training and practise.
- Stop in this position. Make sure the device wheels remain on the kerb, not on the road. Remember that the device will roll slightly before the brakes engage, especially on a slope.
- When approaching pedestrian crossings at traffic lights, position the scooter so that the pedestrian button can be reached from your seated position. You should not have to lean too far forward to press the button. Sometimes it may be necessary to use another item to assist in reaching the button (for example, a walking stick).
- At intersections controlled by traffic lights, start crossing only when the green pedestrian light appears and check that vehicles have stopped to give way to you. Do not leave the kerb if the pedestrian signal is flashing or red as it is illegal to do so, and it may not be possible to cross safely.

### STEP 3 Prepare to cross:

- Scan the road and look left and right for oncoming or turning traffic. Be particularly careful if you have to cross at a T-intersection or roundabout as vehicles will approach from multiple directions. Remember that if you are crossing at a roundabout that does not include traffic lights, you need to give way to cars and other road users on the roadway.
- At intersections controlled by traffic lights, check for left and right turning traffic.
- Do not assume that drivers/riders will stop, even at pedestrian crossings or intersections controlled by traffic lights. Make eye contact with the driver to make sure they have seen you and check that they stop.

## STEP 4 Cross the road:

- Cross the road when it is safe and clear.
- Make sure the rear wheels leave the kerb at a 90-degree angle.
- Make sure the rear wheels are on the road before turning to change direction (e.g. if moving around other pedestrians).
- Travel at a consistent speed.
- Continually scan the road in all directions for approaching traffic.
- At busy crossings, try to travel in a straight line as other pedestrians will expect you to do this, but be prepared to stop/slow down if pedestrians (e.g. children) move in front of you.

## STEP 5 Leave the road at the opposite kerb:

- As you approach the other side of the road, check the condition of the cross-over and the angle of the kerb again to confirm that it is appropriate to use.
- Approach the kerb at a 90-degree angle (or 'straight on'). The exact position will depend on the kerb angle.
- Make sure the rear wheels are off the road before turning onto the footpath.

This resource has been produced by Road Safety Victoria in collaboration with Austin Hospital Occupational Therapy Department to support motorised mobility device user road safety and enhance clinical practice (2020). More motorised mobility device resources are available from the VicRoads website: [vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://vicroads.vic.gov.au)

### Notes and Occupational Therapist contact details:

The provision of this guide to consumers/carers is not sufficient, nor does it constitute or replace, adequate motorised mobility device user assessment and training as would be provided by an AHPRA registered health professional.

AHPRA registered health professionals are authorised users of this resource. Intended recipients include any people who are undergoing motorised mobility device assessment and/or training.