



low-powered vehicles

Do you own or ever ride a small motor scooter, bicycle with an electric motor, “pocket bike” or other small low-powered vehicle? While they might not look that different, some are legal for on-road use and some aren’t. Driving an unlicensed or uninsured vehicle on B.C. roads could result in a ticket and driving without insurance could have serious financial consequences.

Permitted on roads:

Limited-speed motorcycle (small motor scooter)

Must be registered, licensed and insured. May be operated with any class of driver’s licence. Cannot be operated on a learner’s licence other than a Class 6 or 8 motorcycle learner’s licence. Riders are required by law to wear a motorcycle helmet.



A limited-speed motorcycle is defined as:

- No more than 50 cc engine displacement or 1.5 kw motor rating.
- Does not require clutching or shifting after the drive system is engaged.
- Has a maximum speed on level ground of 70 km/h.
- Weighs no more than 95 kg excluding fuel and batteries.
- Wheels must be 25.4 cm in diameter or more.

Electric motor-assisted cycle*

A motor-assisted cycle is a two- or three-wheeled cycle with a seat, pedals and an electric motor. Does not require registration, vehicle licence or insurance. Operator does not require driver’s licence but must be 16 years of age or older.



- Operator is required by law to wear a bicycle helmet.
- May be operated on the road like any bicycle, except where municipal bylaws restrict operation.
- The motor must be electric and have a total combined rated output of not more than 500 watts and be incapable of propelling the cycle at a speed greater than 32 km/h on level ground, without pedaling.

NOTE: Gas-powered cycles and electric cycles without attached pedals don’t qualify as an electric motor-assisted cycle. That means they cannot be used on-road as they can’t pass a provincial motor vehicle inspection and therefore cannot be registered, licensed or insured for on-road use.

* Further details can be found in the *Motor Assisted Cycle Regulation*, BC Reg. 151/2002.

Not permitted on roads:

Scooter, motorized skateboard or self-balancing board

- May only be operated where B.C.’s *Motor Vehicle Act* doesn’t apply, such as private property that does not have public vehicle access or on a trail or pathway if allowed by a municipal bylaw.
- Not to be operated on a public sidewalk adjacent to a roadway.



Pocket bikes (mini motorcycles)

- Commonly referred to as “pocket bikes” or “mini choppers”, don’t meet provincial vehicle standards for use on public roads.
- They are prohibited under the *Motor Vehicle Act Regulations* due to their wheel size, wheel base and seat height.



Permitted on sidewalks, walkways, crosswalks, and paths:

Motorized wheelchair

Does not require registration, vehicle licence, insurance or driver’s licence.

- Motorized wheelchairs are treated similarly to pedestrians and may be operated anywhere that pedestrians are permitted to walk.



Safety tips for operating motorized wheelchairs

- Ride only where it’s safe and follow the same rules and guidelines as pedestrians.
- Use courtesy and think safety.
- Drive at the same speed as other pedestrian traffic.
- Be extra cautious of possible traffic as you approach driveways and laneways.
- Try to avoid sudden turns.
- Avoid using your motorized wheelchair if you’re taking any medication, drugs or alcohol that may affect your skills or judgment.



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