

Types of invalid carriages

There are three types of invalid carriages:

Class 1 - manual wheelchairs, that is self-propelled or attendant-propelled, not powered

Class 2 - powered wheelchairs and scooters, primarily for footway use. With a maximum speed of 4 miles (or 6.4 kilometers) per hour and a maximum unladen weight of 113.4 kilograms (250 pounds). Class 2 vehicles must also have an effective braking system and must use lights and reflectors when being used at night.

Class 3 - powered wheelchairs and scooters, for use on roads/highways with a maximum speed of 8 miles (or 12.8 kilometers) per hour. With the facility to limit the maximum speed to 4 mph for use when travelling on footways.

Class 3 vehicles must have:

- a maximum unladen weight of 150 kilograms (330 pounds)
- a maximum width of 0.85 metres (2 feet and nine inches)
- a device to limit its speed to 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) per hour
- an effective braking system
- front and rear lights and reflectors
- direction indicators which are able to operate as a hazard warning signal
- an audible warning instrument (horn)
- a rear view mirror
- an amber flashing light if it is used on a dual carriageway

If these conditions are not met, you may be prosecuted by the police.

You must register a class 3 vehicle with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

Where class 2 and 3 vehicles can be used

You can use your class 2 or class 3 vehicle on footpaths, pavements, bridleways and pedestrian areas at a maximum speed of 4 mph. In addition, a class 2 vehicle may be used on a road where there is no footpath available.

Class 3 vehicles can be used on most roads at a maximum speed of 8 mph. They may not be used on motorways, 'cycles only' cycle lanes or in bus lanes.

You should avoid using a class 3 vehicle on dual carriageways with a speed limit of over 50 mph. If you do use your class 3 scooter or powered wheelchair on a dual carriageway, you must use an amber flashing light for visibility.

Legal requirements

A class 3 vehicle is not legally defined as a motor vehicle. For this reason, the user is not required to have a driving licence or to take a test. You have to be at least 14 years old to drive a class 3 vehicle.

You must not use your scooter or wheelchair if you are under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medication that may affect your driving ability. If you are in any doubt, consult your doctor.

A class 3 vehicle can only be used by a non-disabled person if that person is:

- demonstrating a vehicle before sale
- training a disabled user
- taking the vehicle to or from a place for maintenance or repair

You do not have to pay Vehicle Excise Duty which is commonly called road tax. You do need to register a class 3 scooter or wheelchair with the DVLA and display a 'nil duty' tax disc. Registration plates are not needed for a class 3 vehicle

You do not have to take out insurance, although it is strongly recommended that you do.

How to register and license a class 3 invalid carriage

New and used class 3 invalid carriages need to be registered for road use, be licensed in the 'disabled' taxation class and display a nil duty tax disc.

Invalid carriages do not need to provide evidence of Vehicle Excise Duty exemption when licensing in the disabled class. They are also exempt from paying the first registration fee.

To register and license a class 3 invalid carriage, you need to complete form V55/5 for used vehicles, or V55/4 for new vehicles. Send the completed form to your nearest DVLA local office. Include evidence of the vehicle's age (if available) and documentation confirming the keeper's name and address. Once your invalid carriage is registered with DVLA, they should send you a 12 month tax disc, before your current tax disc expires.

Rules for users of powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters (36-46)

(Called Invalid Carriages in law)

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There is one class of manual wheelchair (called a Class 1 invalid carriage) and two classes of powered wheelchairs and powered mobility scooters. Manual wheelchairs and Class 2 vehicles are those with an upper speed limit of 4 mph (6 km/h) and are designed to be used on pavements. Class 3 vehicles are those with an upper speed limit of 8 mph (12 km/h) and are equipped to be used on the road as well as the pavement.

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When you are on the road you should obey the guidance and rules for other vehicles; when on the pavement you should follow the guidance and rules for pedestrians.

On pavements

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Pavements are safer than roads and should be used when available. You should give pedestrians priority and show consideration for other pavement users, particularly those with a hearing or visual impairment who may not be aware that you are there.

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Powered wheelchairs and scooters **MUST NOT** travel faster than 4 mph (6 km/h) on pavements or in pedestrian areas. You may need to reduce your speed to adjust to other pavement users who may not be able to move out of your way quickly enough or where the pavement is too narrow.

[Law UICHR 1988 reg 4]

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When moving off the pavement onto the road, you should take special care. Before moving off, always look round and make sure it's safe to join the traffic. Always try to use dropped kerbs when moving off the pavement, even if this means travelling further to locate one. If you have to climb or descend a kerb, always approach it at right angles and don't try to negotiate a kerb higher than the vehicle manufacturer's recommendations.

On the road

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You should take care when travelling on the road as you may be travelling more slowly than other traffic (your machine is restricted to 8 mph (12 km/h) and may be less visible).

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When on the road, Class 3 vehicles should travel in the direction of the traffic. Class 2 users should always use the pavement when it is available. When there is no pavement, you should use caution when on the road. Class 2 users should, where possible, travel in the direction of the traffic. If you are travelling at night when lights **MUST** be used, you should travel in the direction of the traffic to avoid confusing other road users.

[Law UICHR 1988 reg 9]

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You **MUST** follow the same rules about using lights, indicators and horns as for other road vehicles, if your vehicle is fitted with them. At night, lights **MUST** be used. Be aware that other road users may not see you and you should make yourself more visible - in the daytime and also at dusk. For instance, by wearing a reflective jacket or reflective strips on the back of the vehicle.

[Law UICHR 1988 reg 9]

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Take extra care at road junctions. When going straight ahead, check to make sure there are no vehicles about to cross your path from the left, the right, or overtaking you and turning left. There are several options for dealing with right turns, especially turning from a major road. If moving into the middle of the road is difficult or dangerous, you can

- stop on the left-hand side of the road and wait for a safe gap in the traffic
- negotiate the turn as a pedestrian, i.e. travel along the pavement and cross the road between pavements where it is safe to do so. Class 3 users should switch the vehicle to the lower speed limit when on pavements

If the junction is too hazardous, it may be worth considering an alternative route. Similarly, when negotiating major roundabouts (i.e. with two or more lanes) it may be safer for you to use the pavement or find a route which avoids the roundabout altogether.

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All normal parking restrictions should be observed. Your vehicle should not be left unattended if it causes an obstruction to other pedestrians - especially those in wheelchairs. Parking concessions provided under the Blue Badge scheme (see 'Other information') will apply to those vehicles displaying a valid badge.