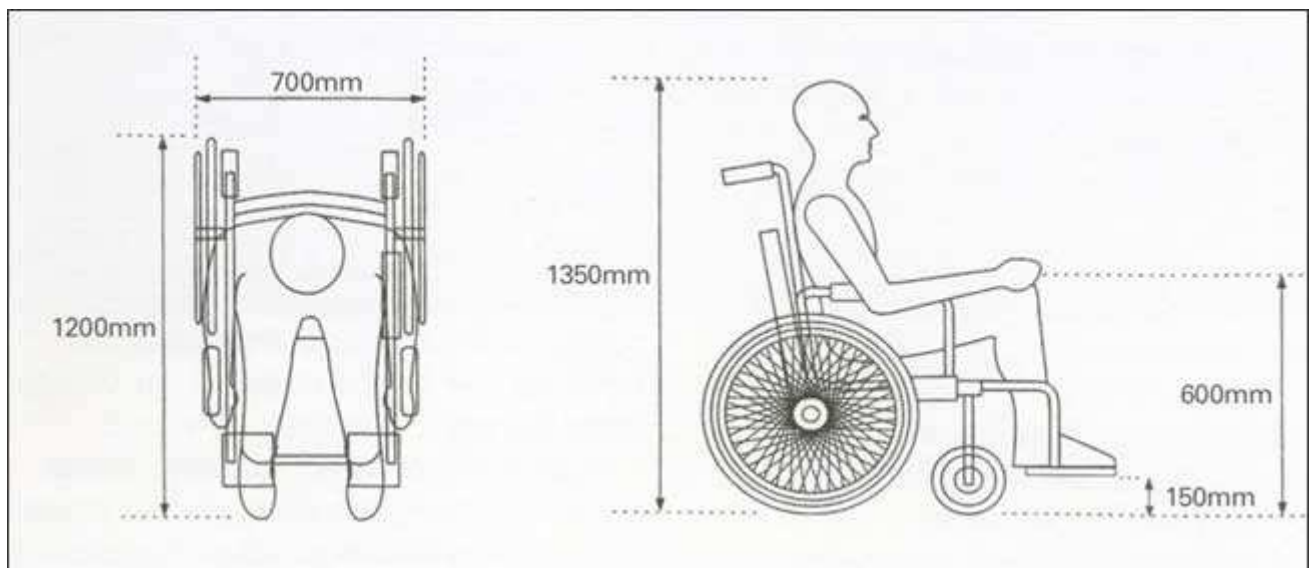


Mobility Scooters and Public Transport

From DfT document 2006

“Although mobility scooters are aimed at enhancing the quality of life for older and disabled people, the majority are not designed for use on the public transport network. They are designed to provide outdoor mobility as an alternative to other forms of private and public transport. They are primarily designed to be used on pavements and roads and are not designed to be carried on public transport vehicles. As a result they can be large, heavy and/or difficult to manoeuvre, and cannot easily be transported in vehicles. This view is shared by experiences of transport operators in the UK. Therefore, the DfT's current view, based on the experiences of operators, is that mobility scooters are not suitable for carriage on public transport.

1.5.2 However, improvements in scooter design have led to models that are comparable - in terms of weight, size and stability - to the reference wheelchair which is used as a basis for current public transport guidance and accessibility legislation. The dimensions of the reference wheelchair were derived from an International Standard on wheelchair dimensions (ISO 7193). The following figure provides the height, width and length specifications for the reference wheelchair.”



it was felt that when purchasing mobility scooters, buyers should be told specifically if the proposed model is suitable for carriage on public transport

Dft a guide to using a wheelchair on public transport

www.ricability.org.uk/reports/pdfs/wheels%20within%20wheels2005.pdf

Rail vehicle accessibility regulations 1998

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1998/2456/contents/made

What are the risks?

A heavy metal object, driven at 8mph and piloted by someone whose reactions may not be as sharp as they once were, could well be considered hazardous. But it is important to keep the risk in proportion, says Kevin Clinton of the Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA).

UK Government - proposed changes (due to be debated early 2011)

Web link

www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/closed/2010-10/consultation.pdf

These are likely to apply to vehicles, also known as invalid carriages, which are used both on the pavement, where they are limited to a 4mph speed limit and on the road, where currently an 8mph limit is in force.

A key proposal would bring in new laws to enable police to prosecute people who use the vehicles in an "irresponsible or dangerous" manner.

Currently police can only act if the driver is caught using a hand-held mobile phone or found to be over the drink-drive limit.

Even drink-driving only leads to a fine because, as the drivers are unlicensed, they cannot be disqualified.

Other changes would include the legal requirement for all owners to have third party motor insurance. This is because somebody injured by a mobility vehicle currently has no redress, neither does a motorist who is involved in a collision – even when the driver of the invalid carriage is at fault.

The Government is also considering making training compulsory and a requirement for owners of mobility vehicles to prove that they are fit to drive them.

While the Government believes the 4mph limit for pavement use should be unchanged, it is ready to raise that which applies for invalid carriages

when they are used on the road – even though it has not said by how much.

Ministers also want these vehicles to be more conspicuous with more lighting and also that those used on the road could be larger than the current maximum, of 331lbs (150kg).

This would make it possible for disabled parents to carry babies or children with them.