



Concerns have been raised about the increasing use of e-scooters in public places. To ride a private e-scooter in any public place is currently against the law unless certain conditions are met. There have also been several significant incidents involving road safety if those riding e-scooters.

We have seen a notable increase in people riding around on the latest range of personal motorised vehicles. E-scooters (also called micro scooters) are typical examples of two-wheel electric powered transporters.

Are Electric Scooters Legal?

Electric scooters, or e-scooters, are an up-and-coming mode of transport, but there's a lot of uncertainty around when and where they can legally be used. With government-backed rental trials taking place across the country, we thought it was a good time to recap the rules as they stand right now.

Are electric scooters legal in the UK?

Yes, electric scooters are legal to own in the UK. However, there are lots of restrictions surrounding where they can be used.

Where can electric scooters be used?

At the moment, electric scooters can only be used on private land. It is effectively illegal to use them on public roads, on pavements, in cycle lanes and in pedestrian-only areas.

Why are electric scooters currently illegal on roads and pavements?

Electric scooters are currently classed as 'powered transporters' by the government and fall under the same laws and regulations that apply to all motor vehicles.

This means that it's illegal to use them on pavements, in cycle lanes and in pedestrian-only areas, and it would only be legal to use them on public roads if they could meet the same requirements as motor vehicles (e.g., in terms of insurance, tax, license, registration and vehicle construction), which in practice is virtually impossible.

The formulation of a law specifically covering electric scooters has been under discussion for some time. It looks like there may be some developments in this area in the near future, particularly with the rental trials currently taking place.

When will electric scooters become legal on roads and pavements?

Electric scooter rental trials have been underway in a number of areas across the UK since summer 2020. Local councils have been working with rental providers to test the viability of electric scooters as a safe and effective source of public transport.

The trial period has been extended until the end of March 2022 so that the most comprehensive evidence possible can be gathered. The government is then likely to launch another consultation phase before any official changes to the law are proposed.

Where can you rent an electric scooter?

As of May 2021, electric scooter rental trials are running in the Whitehaven area locally.

Do you need a driver's license for an electric scooter?

Yes. If you want to rent an electric scooter through one of the schemes mentioned above, then you'll need to hold a valid full or provisional driving license that includes the 'Q' category entitlement. This category can be found on licenses for categories AM, A or B.

Do you need insurance for an electric scooter?

Yes, but this will be provided by your electric scooter rental operator.

Any privately owned e-scooter which is used on a road or public place which breaches either of the primary requirements of:

- The user having a valid driving licence
- A valid motor vehicle insurance policy being in force for the use of an e-scooter.

will be seized by the police under powers granted under section 165 of Road Traffic Act 1988.

If the user is under 16 years of age, the officer will seize the scooter and obtain details of the parent or guardian and speak to them regarding the offences committed. The young person may also be referred to the Child Centred Policing Team for appropriate intervention, or in exceptional circumstances the young person could be prosecuted.

We understand that buying an e-scooter can be tempting especially as they are readily available in many local and online retailers. What is not widely advertised is that e-scooters are classified as Personal Light Electric Vehicles so they are treated as motor vehicles and are subject to the same legal requirements as described above.

With Christmas approaching and the likelihood that e-scooters will be bought as gifts, we are urging people to consider the lawful use of these items before purchasing one. It is legal to use an e-scooter on private land with permission of the land owner. It is also legal to use a rental scooter which is part of the National trial from specific companies.

Due to the volume of complaints being received about e-scooters across the District we are now having to take robust action to deal with the issues caused and to protect road users.

We would be happy to discuss any issues or concerns regarding this matter and can be contacted using the details at the top of this page.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Macdonald', with the number '154' written below it.

David Macdonald
Police Sergeant 154
Copeland Neighbourhood Policing Team

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Stuart'.

Lindsay Stuart
Police Sergeant 1941
Copeland Neighbourhood Policing Team