

# E-Scooters & Micromobility

## Current Government policy

In July 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) introduced regulations to allow trials of rental e-scooters to be fast tracked to support a 'green' restart of local travel and help mitigate reduced public transport capacity. As of June 2024, there were live trials across 19 regions in England, though in some areas it covers several cities<sup>1</sup>. The original deadline for trials was November 2021, though an extension has for trials has been applied 4 times – the most recent of which created the new deadline of May 2026 to enable the DfT to build on 'current learning across areas including usage, safety, and environmental impacts'<sup>2</sup>

Private e-scooter use remains illegal on public roads but legal on private land with the landowner's permission<sup>3</sup>, the same rules apply throughout the UK except for Northern Ireland where legislation effectively prohibits their use<sup>4</sup>.

Since the General Election in 2024, the Government has indicated its intention to legalise the use of private e-scooters on public roads, subject to consultation.

## IAM RoadSmart Research:

Data from the IAM RoadSmart Road Safety Culture Report 2023<sup>5</sup> shows:

- Two-thirds (67%) see the growing use of e-scooters as a personal threat to their safety.
- An overwhelming majority (89%) support a law requiring e-scooters to be type approved to certain standards and for riders to be insured.
- 87% would back a law requiring e-scooter riders to undertake an assessment prior to riding.
- More than three-quarters (78%) support a law restricting e-scooters to roads only (a pavement ban).

<sup>1</sup><https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-users>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/rs/road-safety/advice-escooters/>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.psnipolice.uk/safety-and-support/keeping-safe/roads-and-driving/e-scooter-scrambler-and-quad-safety> <sup>5</sup><https://media.iamroadsmart.com/documents>

## External Research

### **DfT data published in September 2024 <sup>6</sup> based on final data, in 2023:**

- There were 1,292 collisions involving e-scooters, compared to 1,411 in 2022.
- Of all collisions involving e-scooters, 284 included only one e-scooter with no other vehicles involved in the collision (single vehicle collision), compared to 347 in 2022.
- There were 1,492 casualties in collisions involving e-scooters, compared to 1,434 in 2022.
- Of all casualties in collisions involving e-scooters, 1,117 were e-scooter users, compared to 1,154 in 2022.
- There were 6 people killed in collisions involving e-scooters (All 6 of whom were e-scooter riders) compared to 12 in 2022.
- The best estimate, after adjusting for changes in reporting by police, is that there were 414 seriously injured and 965 slightly injured in collisions involving e-scooters, this compares to 441 and 1,049 respectively in 2022.
- Casualties peak during summer months and around 3-5pm in the afternoon.

### **The European Transport Safety Council and PACTS published research<sup>7</sup> in February 2023 setting out rules for both technical standards of devices and e-scooter user rules. It also concluded that:**

- E-scooter stability over surface irregularities and potholes is improved with a larger wheel size.
- In a collision with a pedestrian when travelling at 20km/h, both the e-scooter rider and pedestrian are likely to suffer severe injuries, and the pedestrian injuries are more likely to be fatal.
- E-scooter riders impact their heads with a similar force to pedal cyclists but there is a higher likelihood of facial injury compared to pedal cyclists.
- Acceleration and deceleration reduce the stability of an e-scooter.
- Increased awareness by a rider of their need to manually stabilise an e-scooter may reduce the likelihood of falling.
- Modifications to the steering assembly could improve self-stability. However, for these test and modelling conditions, e-scooters are inherently less stable than bicycles in many circumstances: when accelerating, braking, and negotiating uneven road surfaces.

## IAM RoadSmart calls to action:

- IAM supports initiatives to encourage alternative forms of sustainable transport, including e-scooters and other forms of micromobility.
- Current trials in UK cities should continue to be monitored by DfT and local authorities, including any injuries and collisions.
- Illegal use should also be monitored and challenged by police forces and operators.
- We support wider legalisation of e-scooters (private use) if riders undertook a basic competency to use the devices on the roads. Insurance should also be explored.
- E-scooter design standards (vehicle type approval) should limit speeds (up to 15mph) and have minimum tyre standards to cope with UK road conditions.
- We remain concerned that imported e-scooters have excessive speeds and are also at risk of having exploding batteries. Batteries should be part of regulatory design standards.
- Other standards we believe should be considered include:
  - Front and rear independently controlled brakes.
  - Lighting
  - Indicators
  - Audible warning devices
  - Rider age limit of at least 17 years old (subject to assessment)
  - Carrying of a passenger to be prohibited
  - Drink riding, dangerous, or careless riding, and handheld mobile phone use to be prohibited
  - Pavement riding should continue to be prohibited.

## COMMENT

IAM RoadSmart Director of Policy and Standards, Nicholas Lyes said:

*"As we transition to net-zero and low carbon mobility options become more readily available, e-scooters represent an attractive low-cost option that merits consideration.*

*"The delay to introducing new laws governing e-scooter use is disappointing and a missed opportunity to enshrine safety into use. Too often we see illegal and irresponsible riding of e-scooters causing havoc on our roads and endangering pedestrians on pavements.*

*"It's crucial the Government brings in effective regulation and ensures education and training is at the heart of the new laws to ensure road space can be safely shared by drivers, cyclists and e-scooter riders."*