

FACT SHEET 11

Putting you in the Picture

ONE CALLER to the Wheelchair Users Group has asked us to explain the difference between the different classes of vehicle as defined in “The Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways regulations 1988”.

We hope the following information clarifies the position.

Class 1 – a manual wheelchair, that is to say self-propelled or attendant-propelled, not electrically powered.

Class 2 – powered wheelchairs and scooters for footway use only, with a maximum speed of 4mph, Lights are not required.

Class 3 – Powered wheelchairs and other outdoor powered vehicles, including scooters, for use on roads/highways with a maximum speed of 8mph and facility to travel at 4mph on footways.

Class 3 vehicles must now be registered with the DVLA. (December 2006).

Class 3 vehicles can be used:

- On footpaths, pavements, bridleways and pedestrian areas at a maximum speed of 4mph.
- On most roads at a maximum speed of 8mph.

They cannot be used:

- On motorways, cycle lanes or in bus lanes – when bus lanes are in operation.

It is also not advisable to use them on unrestricted dual carriageways – those with a speed limit of more than 50mph. If they are four-wheeled vehicles then they must use an amber flashing light so they are clearly visible when used on dual carriageways.

It must be remembered that a Class 3 vehicle is not legally defined as a motor vehicle and therefore the user is not required to have a driving licence or to take a test.

The vehicles themselves are not subject to vehicle excise duty – road tax – or mandatory insurance requirements.

However, the law does say that a Class 3 vehicle can only be used by a disabled person aged 14 or over.

It naturally follows that Class 3 vehicles should not be used if you are under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication, which may affect your driving ability. If you are in any doubt, then please consult your doctor.

When using your Class 3 vehicle on footways, then show consideration for pedestrians, particularly elderly people or those who are blind, partially sighted, deaf or hard of hearing.

Although Class 3 vehicles can legally travel at 4mph on footways or in pedestrian areas, it is not always safe to travel at this speed – particularly if pedestrians can't get out of the way quickly enough – e.g. a crowded shopping precinct.

The vehicle must have certain construction features including:

- A maximum un-laden weight of 150 – 330lb.
- A maximum width of 0.85metres – 2ft.9ins.
- A device to limit its speed to 6.4kmph – 4mph.
- A maximum speed of 12.8kmph – 8mph.
- An efficient braking system.
- Front and rear lights and reflectors.
- An audible warning instrument – horn.

Although it is not a legal requirement, an insurance policy is strongly advised, so call our **SUPPORT HELPLINE 08000 740948** for further information.

We hope that answers some of the questions posed by our caller.

Don't hesitate to get in touch with us if there are any other problems or questions you need answers to. We're always here to help and we'll do our best to give you the correct advice.

WHILE EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO ENSURE THAT THE INFORMATION IN THIS FACT SHEET IS ACCURATE AND UP TO DATE, THE WHEELCHAIR USERS GROUP TAKE NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ERRORS OR OMISSIONS. Oct 2006.