

Health Care Advice

ASSISTIVE DEVICES AND EQUIPMENT

Scooters

This item is primarily used for workers who are severely impaired. Workers are considered severely impaired if their disabilities/impairments are:

- permanent and have been rated for either permanent disability (PD) benefits totaling at least 100%, or non-economic loss (NEL) benefits totaling at least 60%, or
- likely to be permanent in the opinion of a WSIB medical consultant, and are likely to meet one of the criteria above (Operational Policy 17-06-02).

General Description

A scooter is a power mobility device, which has either three or four wheels, a base, batteries, and a handlebar for steering. Scooters are typically used outside and for long distances.

Considerations

What is needed	WSIB considers
Information that the worker has difficulty walking due to work-related injury/disease.	Work-related injury/diseases that may lead to a need for a scooter may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• lower extremity amputation,• severe lower body crush injury,• severe low back injury,• respiratory/cardiovascular conditions. Note: This is not an exhaustive list of possible conditions. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consult with the treating health professional or WSIB medical consultant if it is unclear whether the need for the scooter is related to the workplace injury/disease.
There has been a review of the worker's present equipment, if any.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine if the worker has a mobility device and whether it was funded by the WSIB.• Clarify with worker why present equipment is not meeting daily needs.• Determine whether a scooter has been provided by WSIB in the past. If so, see Repairs and Replacement (later in this document).

Guiding Principles

A scooter may be appropriate for severely impaired workers who, as a result of a work-related injury/disease:

- have difficulty walking safely and independently, and
- cannot use another mobility device (such as a cane, walker or manual wheelchair) to carry out normal functions of daily living.

Relevant Operational Policies

Entitlement to Health Care, 17-01-02

Independent Living Allowance, 17-06-02

Independent Living Devices, 17-06-03

Vehicle Modifications, 17-06-07

Home Modifications, 17-06-08

NOTICE: This document is intended to assist WSIB decision-makers in reaching consistent decisions in similar fact situations and to supplement applicable WSIB policies and guidelines as set out in the Operational Policy Manual (OPM). This document is **not a policy** and in the event of a conflict between this document and an OPM policy or guideline, the decision-maker will rely on the latter.

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Mobility Information and Review of Recommendations

If not already on file, mobility information is required to determine if a scooter is necessary, appropriate and sufficient for the worker.

The mobility information is provided by a health professional. The information may be collected in a variety of settings, but is typically completed in the worker's home.

The mobility information is submitted to the Service Delivery Team for review.

The mobility information will:

- clarify the clinical rationale for the scooter,
- determine if it is a safe and appropriate device for the worker, and
- recommend specific features required for the worker's needs.

If mobility information has **not** been provided, a referral should be made to a health professional by the WSIB Service Delivery Team to obtain the required information.

Mobility information required	WSIB considers
<p>Is the worker having difficulty walking to perform daily living activities?</p> <p>Takes into account the worker's physical abilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • estimated walking tolerance, • upper extremity strength and movements to maneuver scooter, • sitting balance, • fatigue, weakness, • ability to transfer on/off the scooter, and • any safety concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor mobility must be significantly restricted without use of a scooter. • Rationale may include inability to propel manual wheelchair far distances, unable to walk on hilly or difficult outdoor terrains.
<p>What simpler and more cost-effective alternative devices were considered (may include cane, walker, manual wheelchair) and why do they not meet the workers needs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information should specify why present equipment, if any, and more cost-effective alternative devices do not meet the worker's needs. • WSIB will consider payment of the most cost-effective mobility device which is clinically necessary and related to the work-related injury/disease.
<p>How often the scooter will be used? Where the scooter will be used?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important that the type of scooter be appropriate for the terrains on which it will be used. • A scooter is not intended to replace a vehicle or accessible public transit. • Scooters are rarely used indoors as they require a large amount of space.

Mobility information required	WSIB considers
Has a trial of a scooter been completed? Where? (E.g., indoor, outdoor, rugged terrain, etc.) Has the trial been determined to be successful?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If worker has tried the scooter (or a similar one) in the environments where it will be used to ensure that it is appropriate.
Information that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the worker is safe and independent using the scooter, and any cognitive/visual perceptual concerns have been identified where applicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the worker has been deemed safe to operate a scooter or It is deemed that with further training sessions, the worker will be safe.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of any expected changes to the worker's condition in the long-term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider rental of scooter if condition is temporary and expected to improve. Ensure scooter is still most appropriate device if the worker's condition is expected to deteriorate.

Home and Vehicle Compatibility

Information required	WSIB considers
<p>Is the scooter compatible with the home environment; if to be used indoors (which would be unusual)?</p> <p>The following information is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> turning radius and maneuverability within the home, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> entrance to home (including walkway/ driveway, doorway width, ramp or steps), doorway widths within the home, and access to bathroom and bedroom. flooring description, elevator. <p>Note: This is not an exhaustive list.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the scooter is to be used indoors, it must be able to fit into the worker's home environment. If home modifications are needed, Service Delivery Team members should contact the Serious Injury Program for information on how to access the preferred supplier.
<p>Where will the scooter be stored (if to be used outdoors)?</p> <p>If there is no space or access in home for scooter storage, what are the alternative solutions identified (e.g., storage in garage)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proper storage of scooter is necessary to protect the device from inclement weather, theft, etc. Ensure that there is a place to charge the scooter in storage area.
<p>Does the scooter need to be transported in a vehicle?</p> <p>The following information is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> whether scooter can fit into vehicle, how scooter will be lifted in/out of vehicle, how worker will transfer in/out of vehicle, and whether worker will be a driver or a passenger. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If scooter needs to be transported, vehicle modifications may be recommended to lift scooter and/or transfer worker in/out of vehicle. Evaluation by a driving assessment centre may be recommended to determine the available options for vehicle modifications, as appropriate. If vehicle modifications are needed, Service Delivery Team members should contact the preferred supplier for vehicle modifications directly.

If the available information is not sufficient, consult with the health professional who provided the information for clarification.

Repairs and Replacement for Scooters

Repairs may be considered if:

- there is an ongoing need for the scooter due to the work-related injury/disease.
- they are necessary for the safe and proper use of the scooter.
- charge for repair is less than the estimated cost of a replacement.
- there has been no significant change to the worker's medical condition or function.
- the scooter is generally in good condition.
- replacement of scooter is not expected to be required in the near future.

Consider replacement if:

- problems with scooter are related to a change in the worker's physical condition.
- scooter is "inoperative" and cost to repair exceeds cost to replace scooter.
- scooter is near end of expected life cycle (e.g., is over five years old).

If a replacement is planned, up-to-date mobility information is needed to determine if a scooter is still a safe and appropriate device for the worker.

Expected lifespan of scooter

A scooter can be expected to last at least five years.

Maintenance / Repair

The WSIB pays for maintenance, normal inspection, repair and replacement of independent living devices (that cost over \$250) unless the damage is due to misuse or to not following the warranty or operating instructions. Workers must ensure proper maintenance is carried out.

Health Services

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