

# General guidance on what to look for when importing a mobility device

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The following guidance is of a general nature and should not be taken as a legal ruling. It is solely provided to help distributors/importers determine what product is likely to be suitable as a mobility device in New Zealand.

The legal definition of a mobility device is *a vehicle that is designed and constructed (not merely adapted) for use by persons who require mobility assistance due to a physical or neurological impairment; and is powered by a motor that has a maximum power output not exceeding 1500W.*

The definition is intended to allow for a conventional mobility scooter or powered wheelchair which has been principally designed to cater for an individual with physical or neurological disabilities.

Accordingly, it would be expected that the key features of the scooter will be designed to accommodate these disabilities - for example, specially designed steering (such as a tiller instead of a steering wheel) for someone with impaired hand control. Such vehicles are intended to be compatible with use on footpaths and able to be manoeuvred through shopping streets and into shops.

When looking for evidence of design intent there are a number of points to consider. If the device is marketed and sold solely as a *disability* mobility vehicle in Europe, USA or Japan, it is most likely to meet the New Zealand requirements.

Secondly, there are some general features that a distributor/importer should look for when considering mobility vehicles. While it is not expected that all of the features will be incorporated, most should be:

FEATURE	DESIGN COMMENT	LIKELY FEATURE	UNLIKELY FEATURES
Steering	Designed for those with restricted grip and inhibited dexterity.	Tiller	Car type steering wheel, motorcycle handlebars with throttle twist grips
Seating	Accommodates one individual. A vehicle that carries passengers is beyond the intent of the mobility definition. Ergonomic or customisable seating for disabled users.	Has one seat	More than one seat
Entry	Designed for a person with disabilities to easily get on or off.	Minimal obstructions, low floor, movable armrests, low movement requirements	Enclosed structures which force difficult movements, obstructions, high floors
Brakes/throttle	Throttle and braking activation suited to physically or neurologically impaired users.	Customised braking levers, throttle release (regenerative) braking	Conventional floor accelerator and brake pedals and/or handbrake lever, twist throttle
Speed	Vehicle's maximum speed similar to pedestrian walking pace.	Limited to under 13km/h	Greater than 13km/h or unlimited
Size	Vehicle width enables pedestrians to comfortably share pathways. General pathway width is 1.5m, though smaller in many areas.	Recommend less than 850mm	Wider than 850mm
Weight	Will the unladen weight enable the scooter to be transported in a traditional van/vehicle?	Less than 150kg	Over 150kg. Mini vehicle.