

政府總部
運輸及房屋局
運輸科
香港添馬添美道 2 號
政府總部東翼



CB(1)1349/12-13(02)
Transport and
Housing Bureau

Government Secretariat

Transport Branch
East Wing, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue,
Tamar, Hong Kong

本局檔號 OUR REF.: THB(T) 3/9/47
來函檔號 YOUR REF.: CB1/PL/TP

電話 Tel. No.: 3509 8200
傳真 Fax No.: 2904 1774

19 June 2013

Ms Sophie Lau
Clerk to Panel on Transport
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Lau,

Electrically Powered Wheelchairs (“Electric Wheelchairs”)

Thank you for your letter of 31 May 2013, relaying Hon Wong Kwok-hing’s letter concerning electric wheelchairs. Our reply is as follows.

The Government attaches great importance to safe use of roads by the public. We conduct regular reviews and implement measures to enhance road safety when necessary.

Wheelchairs, including electrically powered ones, are personal medical mobility aids which allow persons who are unable to walk to achieve mobility. As electric wheelchairs do not belong to any class of motor vehicles, they are not required to be registered and licensed under the Road Traffic Ordinance. As wheelchair users use pedestrian facilities, such as pavements and road crossings, they should follow the rules and guidelines applicable to pedestrians. The public should respect wheelchair users’ right to use road space, and wheelchair users should also respect the rights of others in safe use of roads. The Rehabaid Centre under the Hospital Authority has published guidelines for using electric wheelchairs for wheelchair users (at the Annex).


The guidelines include advice on the use of electric wheelchairs in different situations, including crossing the road as well as travelling safely in crowded environments. A hyper-link to the guidelines has been added to the Transport Department's website since June 2011.

In addition to the above guidelines, section 4(8) of the Summary Offences Ordinance (Cap. 228) stipulates that it is an offence if any person, in any public place drives recklessly or negligently or at a speed or in a manner which is dangerous to the public. The offender shall be liable to a fine of \$500 or to imprisonment for 3 months.

Wheelchair users should exercise care and travel at a suitable speed according to the road conditions at any given time. To ensure safe operation of wheelchairs and avoid overloading, wheelchair users should always follow the product usage instructions given by wheelchair manufacturers or instructions by medical professionals.

Thank you again for relaying Hon Wong Kwok-hing's concern on the matter. We will reflect Hon Wong Kwok-hing's concern to the Rehabaid Centre.

Yours sincerely,


(Kwong Ka-yin)
for Secretary for Transport and Housing



Wheelchair Selection and Training

Safety Issues in Using a Powered Wheelchair

Capabilities Required of Users

1. The user must demonstrate adequate physical and mental skills and the ability to drive a wheelchair in a changing environment. Users with visual or mental impairments should consult an occupational therapist or a doctor to determine their ability to use a wheelchair.
2. The user should be able to maintain an upright posture and withstand rough or uneven terrain. Those with poor trunk control or trunk weakness should consider wearing a safety belt or a support system (a back support, side support, etc.).
3. People with neck pain or neck stiffness should use a mirror to help view the environment if they cannot turn their head.
4. Before attempting to use a wheelchair outdoors, the user should be competent in the skills required to control the wheelchair when moving up or down a dropped kerb, crossing a road and negotiating rough terrain.

Basic Driving Principles

1. Wait at the roadside before crossing the road.



2. Check road conditions and traffic. Do not take risks to cross a road.
3. Follow traffic lights.
4. Avoid obstructing the traffic. Cross the road as quickly as you can, whilst maintaining a safe speed.
5. Slow down while travelling on uneven ground and through crowded environments.
6. Check the speed indicator before restarting the wheelchair, to avoid travelling too fast.

Going Up and Down a Roadside Kerb

Wheelchair users should make use of a dropped kerb to cross the road. However, you may need to negotiate a pavement without a dropped kerb, and you should consult your occupational therapist for advice on this. Ideally, training is required to ensure optimal safety.



Wheelchair Selection and Training

Going Up and Down a Slope

1. In going up a slope, it is important to shift the wheelchair joystick forward and maintain that position while travelling. Steer the joystick in the direction required to make turns.
2. After stopping, restart the wheelchair slowly and smoothly. Where necessary, lean slightly forward to ensure that the front wheels are firmly on the ground.
3. When going down a slope, avoid exceeding the speed you normally travel at on horizontal ground. If you find yourself losing control of the wheelchair's speed, let go of the joystick to stop the wheelchair, then restart the wheelchair at a safe speed.

Using an Elevator

1. Make sure there is adequate clearance for the wheelchair to get in and out of the elevator, to avoid bumping into the doors and walls.



2. Pay attention to other passengers and give way as required.
3. Travel at a safe speed. Ensure you match your speed to your surroundings.

Safety Equipment

Powered wheelchairs should be equipped with the following:

1. The wheelchair should have a headlight on the right-hand side that projects a yellow or white light forward.
2. The wheelchair should have two red rear lights.
3. The wheelchair should have two red reflectors at the rear.
4. The wheelchair should have a horn.

Regularly check the above equipment and ensure that each item is in good condition.