

SAFETY MEMO

April 24th, 2023 – Travel by Power Assisted Vehicle



Did you know?

Introduction

There are many factors that encourage people to use alternative means of transport such as bicycles, scooters, or other self-propelled vehicles to get to work. Alternate means of transport help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, compared to driving a gas-powered vehicle, which benefits everyone through additional savings on cost of fuel and maintenance, and promoting physical and mental health.

The use of alternate modes of transportation, something that has increased significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic began, is also accompanied by an increase in road accidents¹. Also, the use of power-assisted vehicles such as electric scooters, gyro-pods or hoverboards brings its share of risks and accidents.

Regulation

In France, an accident involving a self-propelled or power-assisted vehicle that occurs between work and the home is considered a commuting accident and will be considered as a work accident by investigators.

- If the accident is due to a third party: the latter's insurance is responsible for repairing the damage.
- If the employee causes damage to a third party: it is the employer who becomes civilly liable for the repairs.

In Canada, regulations are still being developed to regulate these modes of transport. Per example, in Quebec, a pilot programme states that the user must undergo training, use roads with a speed limit not exceeding 70 km/h, and wear a protective helmet². It also defines the requirements of such vehicles.

In the United States, the laws differ from state to state and are still under development; however, in the interim, power-assisted vehicles fall under the Consumer Product Safety Act³.

In the case of power-assisted vehicles powered solely by an engine, additional insurance may be mandatory. Check your jurisdiction for more information.

Travel Wisely

Some common-sense rules may help to mitigate accidents:

- Respect the rules of the road (refer to the safety memo, Bicycle Safety, published May 9 and May 16, 2022)
- Use bike paths when available.
- Refrain from using headphones or earbuds while traveling
- Understand and master your mode of transport
- Be in good physical and mental condition (being awake, not being under the influence of narcotics or alcohol)



Use Effective Protection

- Maintain your vehicle in good working order: lights, brakes, audible warning device, etc.
- Wear a reflective vest at night, or when visibility is reduced (ex., fog)
- Wear a helmet and other protections if necessary (knee pads, elbow pads)

Business Case

Businesses are also adapting and considering the commuting needs of employees to create appropriate accommodations, or raising awareness through actions such as⁴:

- The development of traffic plans
- The installation of specialized parking spaces
- The proposal for protection and maintenance kits for these specialized means of transport
- Additional road safety training

¹ Santé publique France. Vélo et risques d'accident : revue de la littérature scientifique en France et à l'étranger de 1990 à 2016. Extrait de <https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/les-actualites/2019/velo-et-risques-d-accident-revue-de-la-litterature-scientifique-en-france-et-a-l-etranger-de-1990-a-2016>

² Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec. Trottinettes électriques. Extrait de <https://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/saaq/documentation/projets-pilotes/trottinettes-electriques>

³ Scooter.guide. What are the rules in the US for electric scooters? March 24, 2022. Retrieved from <https://scooter.guide/what-are-the-rules-in-the-us-for-electric-scooters/>

⁴ INRS. Santé et sécurité au travail. Vélo au travail: quel cadre réglementaire? Extrait de <https://www.inrs.fr/publications/juridique/focus-juridiques/focus-velo-cadre-reglementaire.html>