

A background photograph showing two individuals riding a shared e-scooter on a city street. The person in the foreground is wearing a bright orange jacket and a black backpack. The person behind them is wearing a light-colored jacket. The scooter is green and silver. The street is paved with asphalt and has white crosswalk markings. In the background, there are parked cars, a black car driving away, and trees.

E-SCOOTERS: THE IRISH VS. UK APPROACH

10 APRIL 2025

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IRELAND

- Legal position pre-2024 was unclear.
- Pre-2024, e-scooters arguably came within definition of “Mechanically Propelled Vehicle” under s.3 of the Road Traffic Act 1961:

“mechanically propelled vehicle” means, subject to subsection (2) of this section, a vehicle intended or adapted for propulsion by mechanical means, including—

(a) a bicycle or tricycle with an attachment for propelling it by mechanical power, whether or not the attachment is being used,

(b) a vehicle the means of propulsion of which is electrical or partly electrical and partly mechanical,

but not including a tramcar or other vehicle running on permanent rails”

A person wearing an orange high-visibility jacket and a backpack is riding a green and black e-scooter on a city street. The scooter has the brand name 'Limo-S' visible on the handlebar. The background is a blurred urban scene with cars and trees.

IRELAND

An e-scooter observation study was undertaken by the RSA in 2021:

- 12% of the e-scooter users seen on the footage used footpaths whilst operating their e-scooter
- 73% of users were not wearing a helmet
- 77% of users were not wearing high visibility gear

A person wearing an orange jacket and a backpack is riding a green and white Lime scooter on a city street. The scooter has the 'Lime' logo on the handlebar. The background is a blurred city street with cars and a pedestrian.

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Road Traffic and Roads Act 2023

- Part 12 commenced on 20 May 2024
- Created new category: “Personal Powered Transporters” (PPT)
- Inserted definition of PPT into s.3 of the 1961 Act...



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“...a vehicle—

- (a) designed and constructed for the carriage of a single person, but not designed or constructed for a person with restricted mobility or for the carriage of goods,*
- (b) with a maximum weight unladen of 25 kilograms,*
- (c) with a maximum design speed of no less than 6 kilometres per hour and no greater than 25 kilometres per hour, and*
- (d) equipped with an electric motor having a maximum continuous rated power, or electric motors having a combined maximum continuous rated power, of less than or equal to 0.5 kilowatts,*

but not including a vehicle referred to in paragraph (b) of the definition of pedal bicycle or in paragraph (b) of the definition of pedal tricycle”



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The 2023 Act clarified *inter alia* that PPT operators:

- Do not need to pay motor tax
- Do not need to register their vehicle
- Do not require an NCT Certificate
- Do not need to hold a valid policy of insurance— see definition in s.56(9)(a) of the Road Traffic Act 1961
- No driving licence required



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Full clarity achieved:

- Road Traffic (Electric Scooters) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 199 of 2024) and the Road Traffic (Use of Powered Personal Transporters) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 224/2024)
- Commenced 20 May 2024
- Compliant e-scooters = PPT's



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E-scooters legal for use on public roads as long as device and use compliant with the E-Scooter Regulations:

- Operated at max 20kmph or under (depending on the relevant speed limit)
- Cannot be used for the carriage of goods
- Cannot be used by more than one person at a time
- Cannot be modified to increase speed or power
- Cannot be modified so that the physical or technical characteristics of the vehicle no longer correspond to the manufacturer's design specifications and the information contained on the manufacturer's plate
- Cannot be modified in a manner which compromises the safety of the scooter
- Cannot be used for the purpose of towing other vehicles or equipment
- Cannot be fitted with a seat
- Must meet dimensional, weight, manufacturing and operating requirements
- The fitting of indicators to e-scooters is not mandated

A person wearing an orange jacket and a backpack is riding a green and white e-scooter on a city street. The scooter has the brand name 'Limo' visible on the handlebar. The background is a blurred city street with cars and trees.

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The Road Traffic (Traffic and Parking) Regulations 1997

- Rules applicable to pedal bicycles apply to e-scooters



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- Age limit for e-scooter operators = minimum 16 years of age
- Injuries Resolution Board, *“Accidents involving Cyclists and E-scooter Users”* December 2024
- Contributory negligence issues

A person wearing an orange jacket and a backpack is riding a green and black Lime scooter on a city street. The scooter has the 'Lime' logo on the handlebar. The background is a blurred city street with cars and a pedestrian.

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- Offences – see, for example, the Road Traffic Act 2010 (Part 3) (Fixed Charge Offences) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 227 of 2024)
- Garda powers

A person is riding a green and black Lime e-scooter on a city street. The person is wearing an orange jacket, a backpack, and light-colored trousers. The scooter has the 'Lime' logo on the handlebar. The background is a blurred city street with cars and trees.

IRELAND

- E-scooters are banned on public transport as of 7 October 2024



UNITED KINGDOM

E-scooters are classed as motor vehicles (more particularly, motorcycles) under s.189(1)(c) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (as amended):

“motor cycle” means a mechanically propelled vehicle, not being an invalid carriage, with less than four wheels and the weight of which unladen does not exceed 410 kilograms...”

A person wearing an orange jacket and a backpack is riding a green and black Lime e-scooter on a city street. The scooter has the 'Lime' logo on the handlebar. The background is a blurred city street with cars and a pedestrian.

UNITED KINGDOM

E-scooter trials:

- Electric Scooter Trials and Traffic Signs (Coronavirus) Regulations and General Directions 2020 (S.I. 2020/663)
- Significant amendments
- 22 regions



UNITED KINGDOM

New definition of e-scooter inserted into the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999

“electric scooter” means a category Q vehicle which—

- (a) is fitted with an electric motor with a maximum continuous power rating not exceeding 500 watts;*
- (b) is not fitted with pedals that are capable of propelling the vehicle;*
- (c) has two wheels, one front and one rear, aligned along the direction of travel;*
- (d) is designed to carry no more than one person;*
- (e) has a maximum weight, excluding the driver, not exceeding 55 kilograms;*
- (f) has a maximum design speed not exceeding 15.5 miles per hour;*
- (g) has a means of directional control through the use of handlebars which are mechanically linked to the steered wheel;*
- (h) has a means of controlling the speed through hand controls; and*
- (i) has a power control that defaults to the ‘off’ position;”*

A person wearing an orange jacket and a backpack is riding a green and white electric scooter on a city street. The background is blurred, showing other vehicles and pedestrians. A white rectangular box with a black border is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'UNITED KINGDOM'.

UNITED KINGDOM

Major difference to Irish position:

- Third party insurance is required – but this is typically organised by rental operators – (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators>)



UNITED KINGDOM

Similarities with Irish position:

- No need to wear a helmet (surprising given Department of Transport statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-e-scooter-factsheet-2022/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-e-scooter-factsheet-2022>)
- No need to register

A person wearing an orange jacket and a backpack is riding a green and white e-scooter on a city street. The background is blurred, showing other vehicles and pedestrians. A white rectangular box with a black border is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'FINAL NOTE'.

FINAL NOTE

Motor Insurers' Bureau of Ireland v Motor Insurers' Bureau

- MIBI does not cover loss and damage caused by uninsured e-scooter operators
- But MIB does!

A person wearing an orange jacket and a backpack is riding a green and white e-scooter on a city street. The background is blurred, showing other vehicles and pedestrians.

CONCLUSION

- Ireland and the UK have taken very different approaches to regulating e-scooters.
- Ireland is introducing clearer regulations post-2024, but concerns remain about rider inexperience and pedestrian safety.
- The UK limits e-scooter use to regulated rental schemes, offering a more controlled and cautious approach.
- Both countries need further safety measures, including training, enforcement, and awareness, as e-scooter use continues to grow.

Thank you for listening!