

Segway and Hoverboards: The Law



Personal transporters, such as the Segway Personal Transporter are powered by electricity and transport a passenger standing on a platform propelled on two or more wheels. They are capable of speeds up to 12 mph. Under current legislation, the Department for Transport considers Segway Personal Transporters as motor vehicles, subject to road traffic laws. Hoverboards are in essence a Segway without the central column and handle.

These self-balancing scooters, particularly hoverboards are very popular with children and young people, many of whom will be asking parents or carers for them at Christmas.

As they are considered motor vehicles, those riding them will be subject to Road Traffic Law. So that you can stay safe and legal, please take a look at the FAQ's below.



Segway (left) Hoverboard (right)

1. "I have a self-balancing scooter and I want to ride in on the public road, is it legal for road use?"
No. Vehicles must be approved via ECWVTA or MSVA in order to be licensed and registered. Self-balancing scooters would not currently meet the requirements of these schemes so are not legal for road use.

2. "I have been riding a self-balancing scooter on the pavement (public footway) outside my house, have I committed an offence?"

Yes. It is an offence under section 72 of the Highway Act 1835 to ride or drive a vehicle on the pavement in England and Wales. (In Scotland it is an offence under section 129(5) of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.)

3. "Where can I ride a self-balancing scooter?"

You can only ride an unregistered self-balancing scooter on land which is private property and with the landowner's permission. The Department for Transport would advise that appropriate safety clothing should be worn at all times.

4. "If I ride a self-balancing scooter on a road, will I commit an offence?"

Because self-balancing Personal Transporters do not meet the relevant requirements for use on UK roads, and because there is no separate legislation here for public road use by non-EC type-approved vehicles, they cannot be registered and licensed for use on a public road. As a consequence, any user of such a vehicle on a public road is likely at the very least to be committing the offences of using the vehicle without insurance and using the vehicle without an excise licence. In addition, they do not come within the categories of vehicle covered by a driving licence (the categories of vehicle which a driver is licensed to drive can be found on the reverse of the photo-card driving licence). Therefore, any person using a Segway on a road will be driving otherwise than in accordance with a driving licence.