

Guidance Document

Title: Wheeled Recreational Device Use on Campus

Original Date: November 12, 2001

Revised Date: August 15, 2023

Purpose

Wheeled recreational devices (WRDs) are regularly used on campus at UTHealth Houston. WRDs are defined as any device designed to propel the person, which includes but is not limited to bicycles, hoverboards, scooters, motorized foot scooters, skateboards, roller skates, rollerblades, and unicycles, whether powered by hand, foot, pedal power, gas, electric, solar, or other type of engine. These guidelines are intended to maintain a safe environment for the user of the WRD, pedestrians, and other vehicles and personnel.

Wheeled Recreational Device Safety

Wheeled recreation devices of all kinds must allow for safe passage to pedestrians first by yielding the right of way to pedestrian traffic. When used on pedestrian walkways, such as sidewalks, WRDs must maintain a speed no faster than 8 mph, or the pace of a jog; if used on a bike path or street, the speed should be no more than 15 mph for WRDs. WRD users are responsible for understanding and following the rules of the road, such as stopping at stop signs or stop lights, yielding, and being respectful of pedestrian traffic right of way at all times, especially on sidewalks and in areas of heavy pedestrian concentration. *It is the responsibility of the user to educate themselves on the current city laws, rules, and ordinances as it relates to the use of their device and abide by these.*

Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) strongly recommends that users of any WRD wear a helmet during operation. Also, consider additional protective gear such as wrist guards, knee pads, and elbow pads for added protection. The Texas Medical Center is an extremely busy urban environment, and your safety is our top priority.

Familiarize yourself with the use of your bicycle, scooter, skateboard, hoverboard, or other WRD, prior to coming to campus to minimize injury to yourself or others. Take the time to review operating manuals and other safety information in advance of using your WRD. Electric scooters and hoverboards, for example, can start very quickly and abruptly and require additional precautions for the lithium-ion battery.

Please practice the following safety tips when using your wheeled recreational device:

- Be mindful of surroundings – use extra caution when crossing intersections or operating in congested areas
- Only use with one rider
- Do not wear headphones or devices that hinder your ability to hear surroundings
- Keep both hands on the handle at all times
- Do not operate while impaired
- Use only battery and charger approved by the manufacturer for electric devices
- Do not overcharge – stop charging your device once battery is fully charged
- Do not charge them in temperatures below 32° F or above 105° F
- Keep electric WRDs away from liquids, combustibles, pets, and young children
- Follow manufacturer’s recommendations – no modifications are permitted
- Follow all current laws, rules, and regulations
- Only park and secure the WRD in campus provided bike racks – never park at signs, fences, railing, landscape, or other non-approved location
- Important UT Police reference: <https://www.utph.org/index/about/bike-safety>

Wheeled Recreational Device Parking and Storage

Scooters and bicycles should only be parked at the available bicycle racks located on the exterior of our campus buildings. If the bicycle racks are not adequate, or need repair, please forward your concerns to the FIXIT line at (713) 500-3498. Scooters and bicycles are prohibited inside UTHealth Houston buildings. ***Any WRDs containing lithium ion batteries are strictly prohibited inside UTHealth Houston buildings. Electric scooters must remain outside buildings at all times.***

Other WRDs (hoverboards, skateboards, roller skates, rollerblades) must be cleaned and dried thoroughly before entering UTHealth Houston buildings, so as not to create a slip hazard for building occupants. When storing one of these approved WRDs inside the building, never block exits, corridors, emergency equipment, ADA accessible walkways and ramps, or pedestrian walkways.

Building management and EHS reserve the right to consider request for storage inside the buildings on a case-by-case basis in exceptional circumstances for a very limited time. If this accommodation brings undue risk at any time to building occupants, building management and EHS will not consider the request. Any acts of non-compliance will be forwarded to UT Police, building management, EHS, and if necessary, the UTHealth Houston Safety Council.

UT Police will be the primary enforcers of this policy. However, disciplinary actions will be followed in accordance with current university policies and procedures in cases of continued non-compliance. Please do not hesitate to contact EHS at 713-500-8100 with any questions or concerns.