



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRANS/WP.1/2001/10
16 January 2001

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Road Traffic Safety
(Thirty-sixth session, 3-6 April 2001,
agenda item 4 (d))

**REVISION OF THE CONSOLIDATED RESOLUTIONS ON
ROAD TRAFFIC (R.E.1) AND ON ROAD SIGNS AND SIGNALS (R.E.2)**

Safety of skateboarders, in-line skaters, roller skaters, etc.

Note by the secretariat

At its thirty-fifth session, the Working Party recognised that skateboarders, roller skaters and more recently users of scooters (kickboards) posed a road safety problem. This problem was more urgent in certain member countries but as a fashion might quickly spread to other countries. The Working Party took note of national information on this subject contained in TRANS/WP.1/2000/24 and TRANS/WP.1/2000/42. It decided to continue its consideration of this issue with the possible aim of including a recommendation in the Consolidated Resolution (R.E.1).

The Working Party asked the secretariat to request information from member States on existing regulations, on the road safety problems posed by this group, on studies under way, and on possible solutions and to make a document available for the Working Party's next session. Additional information received from 10 Governments appears below.

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Austria

There are special provisions in the Austrian Road Traffic Act for the use of roller skates (or "in line skates" as they are more commonly called in Austria). They may be used on pavements, footpaths (sign D 5 of annex 3 to the Vienna Convention), cycle tracks (not outside built-up areas) and cycle paths. They may only be used on the carriageway in pedestrian areas, residential areas (sign E 17 of the annex to the European Agreement) and where allowed and signposted by the competent authority. Skaters must not endanger pedestrians or vehicular traffic, children have to be supervised.

Czech Republic

Under the Road Traffic Act of the Czech Republic, roller-skaters and skateboarders are not defined as a specific category of road user and are treated as pedestrians.

The Road Traffic Act and on changes of some acts, No. 361/2000 § 2, letter j)

The following are counted as pedestrians: persons pushing or pulling a sledge, pram, wheelchair or handcart not exceeding a total width of 600 mm, moving on skis or rollerskates or with the assistance of a hand-operated or motorised wheelchair, wheeling a bicycle or motorcycle with a cylinder capacity up to 50 cm³, and so on.

§ 53 section 8

A person moving on skis, rollerskates or similar sports equipment must not endanger other pedestrians on a pavement or a path intended for pedestrians.

§ 57 section 7

A traffic lane for cyclists or a path for cyclists can be used also by pedestrians moving on skis or rollerskates or similar sports equipment. At the same time it is the duty of such persons to follow rules in paragraphs 3, 5 and 6 and regarding light signals in § 73.

Finland

In Finland, skateboarders and roller skaters must observe the rules for pedestrians. Roller skating, etc. must not cause any significant inconvenience to other pedestrians. Use of helmets and protectors is recommended.

Israel

There is no specific rule in which these types of devices are mentioned. However, they are considered "fun vehicles" and as such their use on the road is permitted on sidewalks only. The operator (rider) must take precautions not to endanger pedestrians or other riders of similar equipment. Fun vehicles are not permitted on the roadway used by motor vehicles.

Latvia

Skateboarders, roller skaters, etc. are considered as pedestrians and there are no special regulations for them.

Malta

There are no national regulations specifically governing the usage of skateboards and roller skates. In Malta this activity has always been considered a minority sport/hobby and according to national road accident statistics there have never been any injury accidents or fatalities between skateboarders/roller skaters and motor vehicles on public highways.

Poland

According to Polish regulations, it is forbidden to tow behind a car skiers, roller skaters, persons on sledges, etc. There are no other regulations in which this group of road users is mentioned.

Portugal

In Portuguese legislation, there is no reference to skateboarders, roller skaters, etc. This issue will soon be corrected and they will be considered as pedestrians.

Romania

Romanian legislation does not make any provision for skateboarders or roller skaters. At present this phenomenon exists but on a very low scale. Romania has the intention to prohibit such participants from using the public road network but build special paths for them in parks.

United Kingdom

- Although interpretation of the law is a matter for the courts, it is likely that they would view those using roller blades or skateboards as pedestrians.
- Pedestrians must ensure that their use of the highway does not create an unsafe environment and that nuisance is minimised. For example, it is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 if a person, without lawful authority or excuse, wilfully obstructs the free passage along a highway.
- Section 235 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables local authorities to make byelaws for “the prevention and suppression of nuisances”. These may prohibit or regulate the use of roller blades and skateboards in particular areas, such as on the pavement.
- Although we do not have national statistics on children injured in road traffic accidents involving skateboards or roller blades, the DTI’s Home and Leisure Accident research, gives an indication of the scale of the problem. The most recent figures suggest that this is a relatively small problem compared to, for example, accidents to child pedestrians or pedal cyclists.

- Key to improving child road safety are measures in residential areas to reduce vehicle speed. It is inevitable that children will play in the street whatever advice may be issued. Reducing vehicle speeds will both minimise the risk of them being involved in an accident and reduce the severity of accidents that do occur.
 - The Highway Code for Young Road Users gives the following advice: “When rollerblading or skating, make sure you do so safely and without causing a nuisance to others. Rollerblade only on the pavement, never on the road. Try to avoid busy areas and always take care near other pedestrians, particularly young children and the elderly. Rollerblading may be banned on certain pavements - look out for the signs”.
 - The Department also recommends that rollerbladers and skateboarders wear protective equipment, such as gloves, elbow/knee pads and helmets.
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