

Guidance Document

Title: Wheeled Recreational Device Use on Campus

Original Date: November 12, 2001

Revised Date: May 14, 2025

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 and practice safe operation of the device at all times. 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 and all occupants is our top priority.

Familiarize yourself with the use of your bicycle, scooter, skateboard, hoverboard, or other WRD, before 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:

- Stay alert, especially at intersections and crowded areas
 - One rider per device
 - Avoid headphones or anything that limits hearing
 - Keep both hands on the handlebars
 - Never ride when impaired
 - Use only manufacturer-approved battery and charger at approved location
 - Do not overcharge – stop charging once fully charged
 - Charge only between 32°F and 105°F
 - Keep devices away from children, pets, liquids, and flammables at all times
 - No modifications; follow manufacturer's instructions
 - Obey all applicable laws and regulations
- Park only in designated campus bike racks – no on signs, fences, railings, landscaping, or other non-approved areas
- Important UT Police reference: <https://www.utph.org/index/about/bike-safety>
 - Contact EHS at 713-500-8100 or FIXIT at 713-500-3498 with additional concerns or questions

Wheeled Recreational Device Parking and Storage

Scooters and bicycles must be parked only at exterior campus bike racks. If racks are inadequate or need repair, contact FIXIT at 713-500-3498. ***Electric scooters, bicycles, and any WRDs with lithium-ion batteries are strictly prohibited inside UTHealth Houston buildings.***

Other WRDs (e.g., hoverboards, skateboards, roller skates/blades) may be brought inside only if they are thoroughly cleaned and dried to prevent slip hazards. When stored indoors, they must not block exits, hallways, emergency equipment, ADA paths, or pedestrian walkways.

Requests for indoor storage may be considered by Building Management and EHS only in exceptional cases and for a limited time. If such storage poses risk, the request will be denied.

Non-compliance will be reported to UT Police, Building Management, EHS, and, if needed, the UTHealth Houston Safety Council. UT Police will lead enforcement, and repeated violations may result in disciplinary action per university policy. For questions or concerns, please contact EHS at 713-500-8100.

