

# **National Guideline**

for

**Electric Mobility Aids (Electric Scooters, Wheelchairs, Power Assist  
Devices and Carer Operated Wheelchair Power Pack)**

(RAP Schedule Nos AP05, AP16, AP25 & AP26)

**NOTE:** PRIOR APPROVAL FROM THE DEPARTMENT **IS REQUIRED** BEFORE THE SUPPLY OF THESE ITEMS.

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**Definition of an electric scooter**

An electric scooter is an electrically powered vehicle with three or more wheels intended for use by persons with impaired mobility.

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**Definition of an electric wheelchair**

An electric wheelchair (EWC) is an electrically powered wheelchair intended for use by persons with impaired mobility, paraplegia or quadriplegia.

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**Definition of a Power-assist device**

A power assist device is an electrically powered device that can be mounted on to a manual wheelchair to provide additional assistance for independent operation.

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**Definition of a carer operated wheelchair power pack**

A carer operated wheelchair power pack is a small electric motorised device that attaches to a manual wheelchair to assist a carer to propel the wheelchair via controls mounted on the push bars.

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**Ancillary equipment**

RAP does not provide vehicle trailers for electric mobility aids.  
RAP does not fund ramps for electric mobility aid access.

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**Australian Standards**

Prescribed electric mobility aids must conform to Australian Standards AS3695 and AS/NZS3696. The Standards covers manual wheelchairs with add-on power assisted devices used for propulsion.

Power assist devices must only be used on manual wheelchairs that conform to Australian Standards and have a manufacturer's endorsement stipulating compatibility of the device with the wheelchair.

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**Which appliance is appropriate?**

If, in the opinion of the assessing health provider, an EWC rather than a scooter will be required within six months of the assessment then an EWC should be provided in the first instance.

Power assist devices should be provided only when a scooter or EWC is not a safer, more appropriate option.

Carer operated wheelchair power packs should only be provided where the carer is not able to propel a manual wheelchair, and the DVA client is unable to independently and safely operate a EWC, scooter or manual wheelchair with power assist device.

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## Initial request

The initial request for an EWC, scooter or power assist device must be from a GP or specialist. Where a request is received from another source, the GP (as the case manager) must be contacted for their opinion as to the suitability of providing the entitled person with a EWC, scooter or power assist device. The request should be made by the GP using the form [Electric Mobility Aid \(Electric Scooter/Wheelchair/Power-Assist Device\) Part 1 Medical Questionnaire D9300](#).

The GP should return the completed questionnaire to DVA's Departmental Medical Adviser via email (preferred):

RAPGeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au

OR post to:

Department of Veterans' Affairs

GPO Box 9998, Brisbane QLD 4001

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## Eligibility

Electric mobility aids are provided to veterans who hold a Health Care Card – For all conditions (Gold Card) if they have a clinical need or a Health Card – For Specific Conditions (White Card) if the clinical need relates to their accepted disability. The provision of electric wheelchairs, electric scooters and power assist devices does not extend to war widows/widowers or dependents.

Eligibility for carer operated wheelchair power packs is also open to eligible war widows/widowers and dependants.

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## Assessment

### **If the entitled person is resident in a private home**

The primary purpose is to satisfy functional needs.

An occupational therapist is required to undertake an assessment and report on:

- whether or not the entitled person:
  - has a current driver's licence and whether any conditions apply to it;
  - is still driving their car; or
  - has lost their driver's licence, and if so, the reason for the loss; and
  - has a driving history that includes multiple accidents or incidents; and
  - has a carer or other person capable of driving them to and from destinations;
- the actual distance, if any, the entitled person can walk including details of any mobility appliance(s) used;
- the ability of the entitled person to self-propel a manual wheelchair, including details of distance;
- the actual distance a carer can push the entitled person in a manual wheelchair;
- the terrain that the entitled person would normally be traversing,

whether walking or utilising a mobility appliance (including a manual wheelchair);

- the type of electric mobility aid that is being recommended and that has been decided in partnership with the entitled person (and/or their carer or representative) following a trial;
- in relation to attendant/carer controlled electronic mobility device, the carer's skills and competencies are sufficient to safely operate the device;
- any necessary training and advice that has been or will be provided; and
- the fitting of a suitable safety helmet for the entitled person must be completed during the trial assessment, and a recommendation for a suitable safety helmet should accompany the recommendation for a scooter; and
- whether or not ramps will be required for access and storage. The Department will not fund ramps to access storage facilities for electric scooters.

For electric wheelchairs, electric scooters and power assist devices the following form should be completed as part of the assessment;

[Scooter/Electric Wheelchair Part 2 - Assessment Form](#)

**If the entitled person is resident in a Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF)**

- Entitled persons receiving a lesser level of care in a Commonwealth funded RACF may be eligible for the provision of an electric mobility aid on a case by case basis.
- Entitled persons receiving a greater level of care in a Commonwealth funded RACF are not eligible for the provision of an electric mobility aid except in exceptional circumstances.
- Consent from the RACF management must be obtained before an assessment commences as the provision of such an item may create a safety issue for other residents of the facility.
- Electric mobility aids issued under the RAP schedule prior to permanent entrance into RACF care may be retained subject to approval of the RACF.

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**Additional criteria**

The following additional criteria should be met before issuing an electric mobility aid.

The entitled person should:

- have a severe and permanent mobility impairment as assessed by an appropriately qualified health provider;
- have the capacity to derive significant improvement in their functional independence through the use of an electric mobility aid (EWC, electric scooter or power assist device);
- have sufficient skills and competencies to operate the electric mobility aid (EWC, electric scooter or power assist device) in a manner safe to themselves and others.
- in the case of an EWC or power assist device, be unable to propel a manual wheelchair;
- be able to meet their responsibilities indicated in the section 'Entitled Person's responsibilities'.
- not have reasonable access to viable alternative forms of transport.
- In the case of an attendant/carer controlled electric mobility device, the carer has sufficient skills and competencies to operate the device in a manner safe to the entitled persons, themselves and others.

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**Notification to the GP**

The GP must be satisfied that the entitled person is competent and safe in the use of the electric mobility aid (EWC, electric scooter or power-assist device).

The GP should be advised of any limitations on the use of the electric mobility aid (EWC, electric scooter or power-assist device) recommended by the OT assessor.

The GP must notify the Department if the entitled person develops medical problems that may cause his/her use of the electric mobility aid (EWC, electric scooter or power-assist device) to endanger the entitled person or others.

The GP will receive a copy of the approval letter sent to the entitled person regarding mandatory reassessments.

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**Notification to the occupational therapist**

The occupational therapist must be satisfied that the entitled person is competent and safe in the use of the electric mobility aid. The OT must also agree to schedule – in conjunction with the entitled person – regular reassessments of their capacity to operate the electric mobility aid (EWC, scooter power assist device).

The occupational therapist will receive a copy of the approval letter sent to the entitled person regarding mandatory reassessments.

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**Notification to, and responsibilities of the entitled person**

The advice to the entitled person must include full details of his/her responsibility to transport, maintain, store and use the electric mobility aid correctly, as outlined below.

The entitled person shall:

- sign a formal written agreement with the Department to undergo regular reassessments by an OT of their capacity to operate the electric mobility aid (EWC, scooter or power-assist device).
- agree to the withdrawal of the electric mobility aid (EWC, scooter or power-assist device) if the reassessment finds that the entitled person demonstrates an incapacity to safely operate the item;
- undergo further assessments from relevant health personnel to ascertain their competence if an accident should occur;
- keep the electric mobility aid in safe working order;
- not undertake or attempt to undertake any repairs to the electric mobility aid;
- house the electric mobility aid in a fully enclosed, waterproof and lockable area;
- be the sole user of the electric mobility aid (EWC, electric scooter or power-assist device) ;
- not lend, sell, modify, damage, destroy or otherwise dispose of the electric mobility aid;
- use the electric mobility aid in accordance with any relevant State and Territory laws including road and traffic regulations;
- consider wearing a suitable and fitted safety helmet when operating a scooter;
- report any changes in their medical condition that may affect their capacity to safely operate the electric mobility aid to their GP or OT;
- use the electric mobility aid safely, and solely for the purpose for which it was designed;
- use a power-assist device only with manual wheelchairs that conform to Australian Standards, and have a manufacturer's endorsement stipulating compatibility.

The Department does not fund relevant insurances for electric mobility aids. The Department strongly recommends that the entitled person arranges relevant insurances to protect their own personal safety, the safety of others, the value of the electric mobility aid and any out of pocket expenses that may be associated with legal liability whilst operating the electric mobility aid.

The entitled person is strongly encouraged to organise relevant insurances which may include:

- third party insurance;
- comprehensive insurance; and
- personal injury insurance.

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## Limitations of use

In certain circumstances, the GP or occupational therapist may recommend that the use of an electric mobility aid, (EWC, electric scooter or power-assist device) be limited. Limitations may include:

- the entitled person requiring supervision when using the electric mobility aid (EWC, scooter or power-assist device) outside of their residential property, residential aged care facility or retirement village.
- the electric mobility aid (EWC, electric scooter or power-assist device) being used solely during daylight hours;
- the electric mobility aid (EWC, electric scooter or power-assist device) being used outside peak hour traffic.
- The entitled person and their carer should be informed that alcohol, some prescribed medication and drugs may impact on their capacity to operate an electric mobility aid.