

Unsafe and illegal e-scooter riding linked to lack of rule knowledge

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E-scooter riders are less likely to ride dangerously or illegally if they know the rules and regulations, according to [a new research report](#) by Nottingham Trent University (NTU) that calls for better access to

training programs to reduce collisions.

With about 14.5 million [e-scooter](#) trips recorded in the U.K. between July 2020 and the end of December 2021, recent crash data indicated that the number of incidents involving e-scooters is rising, with 1,437 casualties in collisions involving e-scooters in 2022, compared to 1,352 during the previous year.

The report by NTU psychologists brings together three research projects which assess the profile of e-scooter riders and non-riders, their riding habits, self-reported aberrant riding behavior, and their understanding of current legislation across various riding scenarios.

The full report, "E-scooters: Still the new kid on the transport block: Assessing e-scooter legislation knowledge and illegal riding behavior," is published in the journal *Accident, Analysis and Prevention*.

The first study featured an extensive questionnaire which explored the demographics of 380 e-scooter users (193) and non-users (187) and their behavior. E-scooters riders were found to be younger than non-riders, with a significant proportion being single.

Among these users, men are more likely to ride e-scooters frequently, and most users—more than 50%—only ride for short distances. Predominant reasons for use included to replace walking, for leisure and to replace public transport or car journeys.

When asked about their riding behavior more than 50% of users indicated that they have ridden on pavements and with another person on board. Men reported using their phones and riding through red lights more often than women. Less than 15% said they wore a helmet.

In contrast, when non-users were asked to provide hypothetical answers

on how they would behave, less than 5% indicated they would use their phone or go through a red light while riding an e-scooter. Equally, less than 5% indicated they would ride on pavement. In contrast to the e-scooter users, 35% of non-users indicated they would wear a helmet.

Study two saw 132 riders and non-riders answer questions on scenarios which assessed their understanding and application of four key aspects of e-scooter regulations: bicycle lanes, e-scooter parking, speeding or adherence to speed limits, and riding on main roads.

The results revealed that both [rider](#) and non-rider groups had little knowledge of the rules across all categories, most noticeably for permitted speed limits and designated parking areas. Findings also indicated that some participants assume they are allowed to ride e-scooters on pavements.

For the third study, 52 riders and 59 non-riders were presented with 12 scenarios filmed on U.K. roads and asked whether each situation was legal and if they would ride on that road themselves. At the end of the experiment, participants were informed about current e-scooter legislation.

Around 46% of riders reported that they would not participate in any illegal riding behaviors when they were aware of the rules, while just over that 9% of riders admitted they would still engage in illegal riding practices even if they were aware of their illegality.

Percentages were only slightly lower for non-riders, with 6.6% indicating they would engage in inappropriate riding behavior despite knowing it was against the rules, while 37.6% would follow the law if they were aware of it.

Lead researcher and senior lecturer at NTU's School of Social Sciences,

Dr. Petya Ventsislavova, said, "E-scooters are still a relatively new phenomenon in the U.K. but ongoing trials have seen an increase in use—they have also seen an increase in accidents.

"Our studies have shown how a lack of awareness and understanding of the current e-scooter rules has a direct impact on riding behavior, potentially leading to poor and illegal riding practices. This is exacerbated by the fact that e-scooter riders are generally younger, often around the age of 16 or without driving licenses and may have limited familiarity with traffic rules.

"We see that riders who have better knowledge of the rules demonstrate more consistent and law-abiding [behavior](#) which means that access to [training programs](#), raising awareness of the rules and promoting safer riding practices could ultimately reduce collisions.

"Introducing these measures could also attract more users of different ages and move e-scooting from a mainly recreational activity to a legitimate mode of transport."

More information: Petya Ventsislavova et al, E-scooters: Still the new kid on the transport block. Assessing e-scooter legislation knowledge and illegal riding behaviour, *Accident Analysis & Prevention* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.aap.2023.107390](#)

Provided by Nottingham Trent University

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