
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Detailed safety study coming for electric kick scooters

Updated on Dec. 1, 2023

VICTORIA – The benefits and effects of people using e-scooters will be studied in detail to help more local governments across B.C. evaluate how this clean and popular mode of personal transportation can be safely integrated into local transportation networks.

“E-scooters are part of an ongoing shift toward electric personal mobility that’s reducing emissions by giving people new clean and affordable options to get around,” said Rob Fleming, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. “We’re making it easier for local governments to test e-scooters on their own roads, so we can ensure future regulations represent the needs of people across the province.”

The safety review will start on April 5, 2024, and run for four years. The review replaces the first phase of the e-scooter pilot project that began in 2021, where the use of electric kick scooters was tested in 13 participating communities over a three-year period. The review enables the collection of better health and safety data, which is needed to address outstanding questions about the safe integration of e-scooters into transportation networks. This will help determine if and how electric kick scooters should be permanently authorized for general use in B.C.

During the next four-year period, people will be able to legally use e-scooters in any community that authorizes their use. Participating communities will continue to prescribe how and where electric kick scooters can be used, subject to new regulations. A new streamlined onboarding process will make it easier for smaller and rural communities to test electric kick scooters and address local needs.

Visit the project website to find out if electric kick scooters are authorized for use in your community: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/transportation-environment/active-transportation/scooter>

“Use of e-scooters for personal transportation is growing in communities across B.C.,” said councillor Trish Mandewo, president, Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). “Local governments have asked the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to work with them to ensure that appropriate regulation is in place and will welcome the findings the pilot projects will yield. UBCM appreciates this collaborative and constructive effort to address a critical shift in public transportation.”

During the next phase of examination, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will lead an ongoing safety evaluation, together with government partners, ICBC and the BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit (BCIRPU). This work will complement safety evaluations supplied

by communities participating in the review.

“The BCIRPU is pleased to partner with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure on this important project to evaluate e-scooter safety data relating to injuries,” said Dr. Ian Pike, director, BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit. “This project will clarify any safety and injury concerns, advance our understanding of micromobility and determine whether e-scooters can be a viable mode of transportation on our roads.”

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will be hosting outreach sessions with interested local governments over the coming months to provide information and encourage participation.

Quick Facts:

- Electric kick scooters are battery-powered devices with a motor, two to four wheels, a platform for standing and handlebars for steering.
- Electric kick scooters are a form of active transportation that has been shown to reduce vehicle trips and help support connections to public transportation.
- Ontario and Quebec are also evaluating the use of electric kick scooters.
- Amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act passed in spring 2023 establish a new legislative framework for testing new and emerging forms of active transportation.
- The government began the first stage of the project in 2021 to test the use of electric kick scooters in participating communities for a three-year period.

Learn More:

For more information about the electric kick scooter pilot project, visit <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/transportation-environment/active-transportation/scooter>

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BACKGROUND

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What to know about interim findings of the electric kick scooter pilot project

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has been collecting and analyzing the results of the first two years of the pilot project. Interim data has been provided by participating communities and a public opinion survey was conducted by Angus Reid Group.

Interim findings to date:

British Columbians support the testing of electric kick scooters:

A majority of British Columbians surveyed see these devices as improving their transportation options. Electric kick scooters represent a convenient and relatively affordable mode of transportation, whether used for commuting, running errands or simply for pleasure.

Electric kick scooters have environmental benefits:

Data from participating communities indicate these devices promote active, clean transportation and reduce carbon footprint. For example:

- Kelowna recorded more than 600,000 trips by electric kick scooters and other micromobility devices in approximately two years, 48% of which replaced vehicle trips.
- Vernon reported more than 470,000 kilometres travelled by users of its shared electric kick scooter provider, with 50% of users using the devices to commute.

Participating communities have higher levels of support:

More than two-thirds of British Columbians surveyed are supportive of the project, especially in participating communities. Residents in participating communities also have greater awareness of the project. They said they were more likely to use these devices and were satisfied with available clean-transportation choices.

Electric kick scooters can help meet sustainable transportation goals:

Most participating communities have policies supporting clean transportation and see electric kick scooters as enhancing connections to public transit and addressing gaps in existing transportation networks. Local governments are also using their participation as a way to test e-bike/bike shared-service programs in their community. More data is needed to assess electric kick scooter safety and reductions in vehicle trips.

Injuries and conflicts with other road users are rare when operators follow the rules:

National data provided by a shared-service provider indicate that 99.9% of electric kick scooter trips end without incident. Of the 0.01% trips during which an incident occurs, only 1.5% are

severe (needing more than 24-hour hospitalization). To date, there have been no fatalities in B.C.

Overall awareness of the project and electric kick scooter laws is low:

Less than one-third of British Columbians surveyed are aware of the pilot project and rules for electric kick scooters. Greater public education and awareness is needed to support compliance.

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