

Vacaville Police Department

Information Release

Date: January 2005



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Motorized Scooter Laws and Guidelines

The Vacaville Police Department has received numerous calls from concerned community members regarding motorized scooters on our roadways.

California Law intended that these scooters "not contribute to increased air pollution or increase traffic congestion." However, most of these scooters use a two-stroke motor, which causes a great deal of pollution. California Vehicle Code (section 407.5) describes the definition of a motorized scooter; this includes, but is not limited to, power by an electric motor.

Currently, these scooters do not need to be registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles. You are not required to have insurance, but you may want to see if your insurance company will cover you or your child. Distributors of these motor scooters are obligated by law to inform you about checking with your insurance company to see if they will cover the rider and the scooter.

Effective January 1, 2005:

- You must have a driver's license or instruction permit to operate a motorized scooter.
- Motorized scooters cannot be sold or offered that produce a sound level of 80 dBA or higher at a distance of 50 feet. This law also requires motor scooters to be equipped with a muffler that is in compliance with the Vehicle Code and working at all times.
- You may not operate a motorized scooter on a highway with a posted speed limit in excess of 25-mph unless it is operated in a bicycle lane.
- You cannot have any passengers in addition to the driver.
- You cannot operate a motorized scooter upon a sidewalk, except as may be necessary to enter or leave adjacent property.
- You cannot operate a motorized scooter without wearing a properly fitted and fastened bicycle helmet.
- You cannot leave a motorized scooter lying on its side on any sidewalk, or park a motorized scooter on a sidewalk in any other position, so that there is not an adequate path for pedestrian traffic.
- You cannot attach the motorized scooter or yourself while on the roadway to any other vehicle on the roadway.
- The motorized scooter shall not be operated at a speed in excess of 15-mph.
- You must ride as close as practical to the right-hand curb or right edge of the roadway when traveling at a speed less than the normal speed of traffic.

There are other laws and regulations pertaining to these scooters than listed here. You may contact the Department of Motor Vehicles, or refer to sections 21220 through 21230 of the California Vehicle Code.

If you are thinking about purchasing a motorized scooter for your child refer to the laws listed above. There are fines attached to each of these violations when not followed. Remember to drive safely!