



Segways, the law and you

Yes folks the news is official, it is now legal for Segways to be used on footpaths across Queensland last week and reports are that tour operators and members of the general public are already planning to ride them on public footpaths.

Reaction from pedestrians is understandably mixed, most did not care when they were displayed at Currumbin last week, some enjoyed the spectacle but others seem distressed and annoyed that they had to move out of the way.

The Segways take up a large chunk of the path, but with the legislation restricting them to 12km/h and mechanisms in place for them to slow down, they are not as terrorising as some people suggested.

Surfers Paradise councillor Lex Bell was still adamant about their danger yesterday, having received feedback from the community they were dangerous and riders could "sneak up" on pedestrians.

"I see it as a sad day for pedestrians because they have yet another quietly moving object to contend with on their walks," Cr Bell said.

"I've received a lot of feedback from elderly people who are personally concerned about Segways for themselves, but also for children."

In the US, a toddler in Honolulu was left with bruising and red welts after being run over on the sidewalk by a careless Segway rider and a Connecticut jury awarded a man \$10 million after he tumbled from a Segway and suffered brain damage in 2009.

Queensland is the first Australian state to approve the vehicles which are used in many European countries and the majority of American states.

Transport Minister Scott Emerson defended his approval amid claims he ignored a string of safety warnings.

Police, the National Transport Commission and transport department officials were concerned Segways were too wide for footpaths, had poor manoeuvrability in wet weather, had wide turning circles and raised insurance issues.

Mr Emerson said he took the advice on board and imposed safety measures that are tougher than in other parts of the world.

Safety measures include bans on people under 12 using them, a speed limit of 12km/h, helmets, bells and banning mobile phones and drink-driving.

The problem with Segways however is insurance. What if you're injured as a result of a Segway colliding with you? What if you're hit by a drink driver, or run over as you're walking down the footpath or when you're taking out the rubbish?

Segways are a personal mobility device. Like a bicycle or a motorised scooter, they are not covered by Third Party Insurance, in the same way that cars, trucks and motor cycles are insured against claims for compensation for injuries arising out of accidents that occur on the road. This means that if you're hurt as a result of the negligent driving of a Segway, you're not covered for insurance. You're on your own with your injury, medical expenses and any loss of income.

It should be compulsory for Segways to be registered and covered by CTP insurance in the same way as vehicles that travel on our roads. Otherwise, there's no safety net for people who are injured by Segways.

If you or a member of your family suffers an injury on the road you may be entitled to claim compensation, to ensure your rights are protected it is important you contact a lawyer immediately.

At GC Law we specialise in personal injury law and will fight to protect your right to claim compensation, so call us today or use our Free Case Review to determine if you have a case for compensation.

Contact GC law on 1 300 302 318 to discuss your personal injury compensation claim.