

Scooting Around the World: Exploring Walt Disney World on a Scooter or ECV

by Deb Kendall, PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

About 15 years ago I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia. For those not familiar with this, it is a connective tissue illness that causes all-over pain, fatigue, and "brain fog." The first few years I didn't want to accept this diagnosis and tried to do Walt Disney World on foot. I found that after one day of walking the park I was in so much pain I couldn't take a step without tears in my eyes. It made for a non-magical vacation.

I decided it was time to get a scooter (also known as an ECV, which stands for Electrical Conveyance Vehicle). It is a whole different "world" going to Walt Disney World on a scooter. You have to learn how to board buses, boats, and monorails. And it's not as easy as it looks!

I was luckier than most people because I had my own scooter at home and had learned to drive it pretty well. Driving the scooter at Walt Disney World is still a whole different animal--lots of people everywhere not looking where they are going, kids dashing out in front of you, doors closing in your face... you really need to be on the lookout at all times. You also must be able to drive backwards, and parallel park on buses, etc.

The first thing I learned is to be very aware of my surroundings, especially keeping an eye out for "dashers." Most people think scooters have brakes. They don't! There is an accelerator--when we push it the scooter moves, when we take our foot off, the scooter stops. It takes a little bit of space for a scooter to stop when we let off the accelerator. Please be aware of this when you stop in front of us.

Here's a tip for those on foot, when you or your group decide to stop, please move over to the side of the pathway so you don't cause a hazard for those of us on wheels. We really don't want to crash into you or have to suddenly swerve and possibly hit someone else. Please remind kids to also look before they run off. It is so scary for us driving scooters in crowds at closing time or when shows let out. I usually pull off the pathways till things thin out because I get so nervous, fearful that I will clip someone.

Some other tips regarding folks driving scooters or ECVs: It is fine to hold open a door for us--I really appreciate everyone that has been helpful to me. I have found most people I encounter on solo trips are wonderful, polite, and treat me with kindness and respect. We are lower to the ground than most other people and do encounter obstacles,

but we love to interact with everyone and are friendly people, too. We love Walt Disney World and PassPorters love to chat!

Buses: Scooters are loaded first, but exit last. We are loaded first because we need the scooter to be strapped down. When parking on the bus I always parallel park. It takes some practice but once it is mastered you can get the scooter in place pretty fast so the rest of the guests can load. Buses can only carry two scooters and there are times we wait bus after bus till we can get on one with room for us. We know you want to get on fast and we apologize for making you wait. Thank you for your patience.

Riding the monorail is fun! It's easy to get on and off with the ramp. But I always worry that they will forget to let me off. When I travel alone I always ask someone exiting to let the cast member know I need the ramp. The worst that could happen is another trip around. It is a great means of transportation for those with wheels.

Like the monorail, boats also have similar ramps and are also easy to get on and off of most of the time.

Some people think that because we are on scooters we get "front of the line passes"--this is not true. We actually wait longer in some cases because we load at different entrances on some of the rides and must wait for other scooter people before us. The only queues I have used alternate entrances on are the ones that have queues that are too hard to navigate through. The difference between entrances is strictly easier access to the ride loading zone. Most rides now have mainstream lines that can accommodate scooters, so we all go through the same queues as you.

Having a scooter has made my Walt Disney World trips more enjoyable and less painful. I have learned that people are very kind and helpful to me. If you need mobility help, a scooter is the way to go. There are many off-site companies to rent from for the duration of your trip. They will deliver the scooter to your resort and pick it up when you leave.

[PassPorter's Vacationing Your Way: Your Special Needs forum](#) has lots of information on this subject.

About The Author: Deb Kendall is a Co-Guide for the PassPorter's Vacationing Your Way: Your Special Needs forum Message Board. She is a Disney Vacation Club Member and is always looking forward to her next Walt Disney World Vacation

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