

Liverpool Hope University
Health and Safety

Fire Safety of Motorised Wheelchair Attachments – Guidance Note

1. Purpose

This guidance note outlines the fire safety considerations associated with the use of motorised wheelchair attachments (e.g. power assist devices and clip-on drive units) at Liverpool Hope University. It is intended to support safe use, charging, and storage of such devices on campus.

*This guidance does not apply to e-scooters, e-bikes or e-hoverboards, which are not permitted to be charged on campus.

2. Background

Motorised attachments for wheelchairs are becoming increasingly common and improve independence for users. However, these devices often use lithium-ion batteries, which can present fire risks if not properly maintained or charged. The University is committed to supporting accessibility while maintaining a safe environment for all users.

3. Fire Safety Considerations

3.1 Battery Type and Quality

Most attachments use lithium-ion batteries. These are generally safe when sourced from reputable suppliers and fitted with integrated Battery Management Systems (BMS). Only equipment with appropriate CE or UKCA markings and evidence of compliance with safety standards (e.g. UN 38.3, BS EN 62133) should be used on campus.

3.2 Charging Practices

- Always use the manufacturer-provided charger.
- Charging should be undertaken in well-ventilated, non-carpeted areas away from combustible materials.
- Avoid leaving devices charging overnight or unattended.
- Charging points must be kept clear of obstruction and allow safe evacuation if necessary.

3.3 Storage and Handling

- Store devices and batteries away from heat sources, direct sunlight, or moisture.
- Do not store or charge devices on escape routes, communal areas, or near flammable materials.
- Any device showing signs of damage (e.g. swelling, overheating, leaking) must be removed from service immediately and reported to Campus Services.

3.4 Inspection and Maintenance

- Regular user checks are encouraged.
- Follow the manufactures guidance on battery inspection and maintenance.
- Charging equipment must be subject to Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) in line with the University's PAT policy.

3.5 Institutional Risk Management

- Staff or students using powered mobility devices are encouraged to inform Health and Safety to ensure reasonable adjustments are supported and fire safety considerations are assessed.
- Devices should not obstruct corridors, access routes, or fire exits.
- Where required, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) will be created in collaboration with the user.

4. Summary

Motorised wheelchair attachments are welcome at Liverpool Hope University, and when used in line with manufacturer instructions and this guidance, are considered safe. The University's approach balances personal independence with the need to manage fire risks appropriately.

For further information or support, please contact:

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