



## Practitioner & DMEPOS Supplier Information on Power Mobility Devices



### What's Changed?

Note: No substantive content updates.

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## Medicare Covers Power Mobility Devices

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Medicare Part B covers power mobility devices, including power-operated vehicles (scooters) and power wheelchairs, as [Mobility Assistive Equipment](#).

We cover these devices if the Medicare patient, practitioner, and supplier meet these basic coverage criteria:

- The qualified practitioner (a physician or non-physician practitioner) submits a standard written order (SWO).
- The practitioner sees the patient face-to-face. See [Step 1: See the Patient Face-to-Face](#) for more information.
- The practitioner and DMEPOS supplier both accept Medicare.
- The patient:
  - Has a mobility limitation that:
    - Significantly impairs their ability to perform 1 or more of these mobility-related activities of daily living:
      - Using the toilet
      - Eating
      - Getting dressed
      - Grooming
      - Bathing in a bathroom
    - Can't be sufficiently and safely resolved using a cane or walker
  - Doesn't have the upper extremity function needed to use an optimally configured manual wheelchair in their home to perform activities of daily living. The patient may have 1 of these:
    - A limitation of strength, endurance, range of motion, or coordination
    - Presence of pain
    - Deformity or absence of 1 or both upper extremities
  - Can safely operate and get on and off the device, or have someone with them who's available, willing, and able to help them safely use the device.
  - Meets the criteria listed in [Local Coverage Determination \(LCD\): Power Mobility Devices \(L33789\)](#).
  - Meets the conditions for the specific device. See [Types of Devices](#) for more information.

## Types of Devices

Practitioners can help determine which type of device best meets their patient's needs. We cover the following items if the patient, practitioner, and supplier meet the basic coverage criteria above AND ALL these conditions apply.

### Power-operated vehicle (scooter)

The patient:

- Can get in and out of the vehicle safely
- Can operate the vehicle's tiller steering system
- Can maintain postural stability and position while operating the vehicle in their home
- Is mentally and physically able (including having the cognitive function, judgment, and vision) to safely operate the vehicle in their home
- Lives in a home that allows the vehicle adequate access between rooms, maneuvering space, and surfaces
- Can use the vehicle at home to significantly improve their ability to participate in mobility-related activities of daily living at home, like using the bathroom or eating
- Hasn't expressed that they're unwilling to use the device at home
- Meets both these weight requirements:
  - They weigh less than or equal to the maximum weight capacity of the power-operated vehicle
  - They weigh greater than or equal to 95% of the weight capacity of the next lower power-operated vehicle weight class
- Meets all [LCD L33789](#) criteria



### Power wheelchair

The patient:

- Is mentally and physically able to operate the device, or they have a caregiver who's available and willing, but can't push an optimally configured manual wheelchair in a safe or effective way
- Lives in a home that allows the device adequate access between rooms, space within rooms, and surfaces
- Can use the device to significantly improve their ability to participate in mobility-related activities of daily living at home
- Hasn't expressed that they're unwilling to use the device at home
- Meets both these weight requirements:
  - They weigh less than or equal to the maximum weight capacity of the power wheelchair
  - They weigh greater than or equal to 95% of the weight capacity of the next lower power wheelchair weight class
- Doesn't meet all the criteria for a power-operated vehicle
- Meets all [LCD L33789](#) criteria



See the [Master List](#) for the full library of DMEPOS items that may be selected for inclusion on the [Required Face-to-Face Encounter and Written Order Prior to Delivery List](#) or the [Required Prior Authorization List](#).

## Medicare Covers Options & Accessories

We cover options and accessories if both these apply:

- The patient has a power mobility device that meets our coverage criteria
- Medical necessity is supported in the medical record

Options and accessories include, but aren't limited to:

- Arm of chair
- Foot or leg rests
- Back cushions
- Seat cushions
- Non-standard seat frames
- Batteries and chargers
- Power tilt and recline seating systems
- Power wheelchair drive control systems
- Power [seat elevation equipment](#) for certain power wheelchairs

We don't cover all options and accessories.

[LCD: Wheelchair Options/Accessories \(L33792\)](#) has more information.



## Medicare Covers Repairs & Replacements

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We cover repairs (including parts and labor) of patient-owned power mobility devices if reasonable and necessary.

View [42 CFR 414.210](#) for more information.

## Practitioners: What You Need to Do

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### Step 1: See the Patient Face-to-Face

A face-to-face visit is an in-person visit or telehealth visit between you and the patient. If you use telehealth for the visit, you must meet [telehealth services requirements](#) to get [paid](#).

You must conduct and document the encounter for us to cover a power mobility device. Be sure to gather all information about diagnosing, treating, or managing the patient's condition that requires the power mobility device. This visit must happen within 6 months before ordering a device.

During the visit:

- Evaluate and treat the patient for their medical conditions
- Tailor your evaluation to the patient's conditions
- Determine if a power mobility device is necessary for their treatment plan
- Document that a mobility exam was a major reason for the visit
- Perform a mobility exam, including a physical exam and assessment of their mobility-related activities of daily living
- Answer these questions about the patient:
  1. What's their mobility limitation?
  2. Does their mobility interfere with them performing activities of daily living?
  3. Why won't a cane or walker meet their needs at home?
  4. Why won't a manual wheelchair meet their needs at home?
  5. Why won't a power-operated vehicle, if applicable, meet their needs at home?
  6. Are they physically and mentally able to operate a power wheelchair safely in the home?

You don't need to do a new face-to-face visit in these limited cases:

- The power mobility device is replaced during the 5-year useful lifetime of the item, and it's in the same performance group previously covered.
- You're ordering power mobility device accessories that aren't included in the [Required Face-to-Face Encounter and Written Order Prior to Delivery List](#). See [Types of Devices](#) for more information.

## Step 2: Update Their Medical Record

After the face-to-face visit, document the encounter in a detailed narrative note in the patient's chart. Try to paint a picture of the patient's functional abilities and limitations on a typical day. Include as much objective information as possible.

Consider including these details about the patient:

- **Present and past medical history of mobility needs**, including:
  - Symptoms and diagnoses that make it difficult for them to move
  - Medications or other treatments
  - Increased difficulty moving over time
  - Other related ambulatory problems
  - Description of their home
  - Confirmation that the patient can perform activities of daily living at home
  - How far and fast they can walk without stopping
  - If they need help standing up from a seat
  - What they currently use to help them get around
  - Any changes that now require they use a power mobility device
- **Physical exam**, which focuses on the patient's body systems that are responsible for ambulatory difficulty or impact their ambulatory ability, including:
  - Height
  - Weight
  - Cardiopulmonary exam results
  - Musculoskeletal exam results
  - Neurological exam results, like balance
  - Respiratory, cardiovascular, or neuromusculoskeletal information
  - Other medical conditions

You can include other relevant details, even if they aren't on this list. You don't need to include elements if they don't apply (for example, don't include respiratory information if a patient doesn't have a respiratory illness or injury).

**Tip:** Be sure to submit complete, signed medical records that show a power mobility device is medically necessary.

In addition to the detailed narrative, be sure the patient's medical record supports the medical need for a power mobility device in their home. Include lab tests, X-rays, and any other diagnostic tests that show their mobility needs.

**Tip:** Some DMEPOS suppliers may provide templates for documentation. While these may be helpful, they aren't a substitute for a comprehensive medical record.

### Step 3: Write a Standard Written Order (Prescription)

Write a prescription, known as a standard written order or SWO, that shows the patient's need for a power mobility device. Send this to the DMEPOS supplier within 6 months of the face-to-face visit. When the DMEPOS supplier gets the order, they can submit the claim. For some items, like power wheelchairs, the practitioner must send the order to the DMEPOS supplier before they deliver the item.

**Tip:** You must do the face-to-face visit and the SWO. You can't write the SWO if another practitioner sees the patient for the face-to-face visit.

The SWO must include:

- The patient's name or MBI
- A general description of the item, like brand name or model number, HCPCS code, or HCPCS code narrative
- Quantity, if applicable
- Order date
- Your name or NPI
- Your signature

### Step 4: Make a Prior Authorization Request

[Power mobility devices](#) require approval before delivery to the patient. A Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) will review the prior authorization request, and then tell you if the item is approved ("affirmation") or not approved ("non-affirmation"). If you don't get prior authorization before delivery, we deny the claim. This request can be completed by either you or the DMEPOS supplier, not both.

[Voluntary prior authorization](#) is available for some options and accessories.

### Step 5: Complete a Home Assessment

Perform an on-site patient home assessment and write a report. The report must show the patient can safely use the power mobility device, considering these home details:

- Physical layout
- Doorway width
- Doorway threshold
- Surfaces

You or the DMEPOS supplier must complete the on-site visit. This can happen either before or during delivery of the power mobility device.

## Step 6: Review All Information to Avoid Improper Payments

It's important to work together with DMEPOS suppliers to avoid improper payments. Be sure to:

- **Complete steps 1–5 above**
- **Double check each patient's medical record and all necessary documents**
- **Know the common causes of improper payments** to avoid spending time and money to correct and resubmit information

Power mobility devices, related options, accessories, and repairs have a high improper payment rate. To avoid improper payments for power mobility devices, be sure:

- Medical records are complete
- Medical records show the devices are medically necessary
- No information or documents are missing, including your signature on the SWO

To avoid improper payments on accessories, repairs, and replacements, be sure to:

- Show a device replacement is necessary
- Show repairs are reasonable, are necessary, or meet the requirements
- Show that suppliers document labor time adequately
- Show that DMEPOS suppliers must provide repair warranties
- Specify that wheelchair repair costs can't exceed a certain amount over a device's 5-year lifetime



## DMEPOS Suppliers: What You Need to Do

### Step 1: Check the Standard Written Order (Prescription)

Make sure there's a written, signed, and dated SWO for all items, including options, accessories, and seating.

### Step 2: Make a Prior Authorization Request

[Power mobility devices](#) require approval before delivery to the patient. A MAC will review the prior authorization request, and then tell you if the item is approved ("affirmation") or not approved ("non-affirmation"). This request can be completed by either you or the practitioner, not both.

[Voluntary prior authorization](#) is available for some options and accessories.

### Step 3: Complete a Home Assessment

Perform an on-site patient home assessment and write a report. The report must show the patient can safely use the power mobility device, considering these home details:

- Physical layout
- Doorway width
- Doorway threshold
- Surfaces

You or the ordering practitioner must complete the on-site visit. This can happen either before or during delivery of the power mobility device.

### Step 4: Keep Documents

Keep these documents and be able to provide them, if requested:

- SWO
- Face-to-face visit supporting documents
- Written home assessment report
- Proof of delivery
- Records describing repairs, including a detailed explanation that justifies components or parts replaced and labor time to fix the item
- Licensed/certified medical professional specialty evaluation or assistive technology professional evaluation, if required

**Tip:** View the [Complying with Medicare Signature Requirements](#) fact sheet to learn more about proper documentation.

## Step 5: Review All Information to Avoid Improper Payments

It's important to work together with practitioners to avoid improper payments. Be sure to:

- **Complete steps 1–4 above**
- **Double check each patient's medical record and all necessary documents** before you submit a claim
- **Know the common causes of improper payments** to avoid spending time and money to correct and resubmit information

Power mobility devices, related options, accessories, and repairs have a high improper payment rate. To avoid improper payments for power mobility devices, be sure:

- Medical records are complete
- Medical records show the devices are medically necessary
- No information or documents are missing, including the practitioner's signature on the SWO

To avoid improper payments on accessories, repairs, and replacements, be sure to:

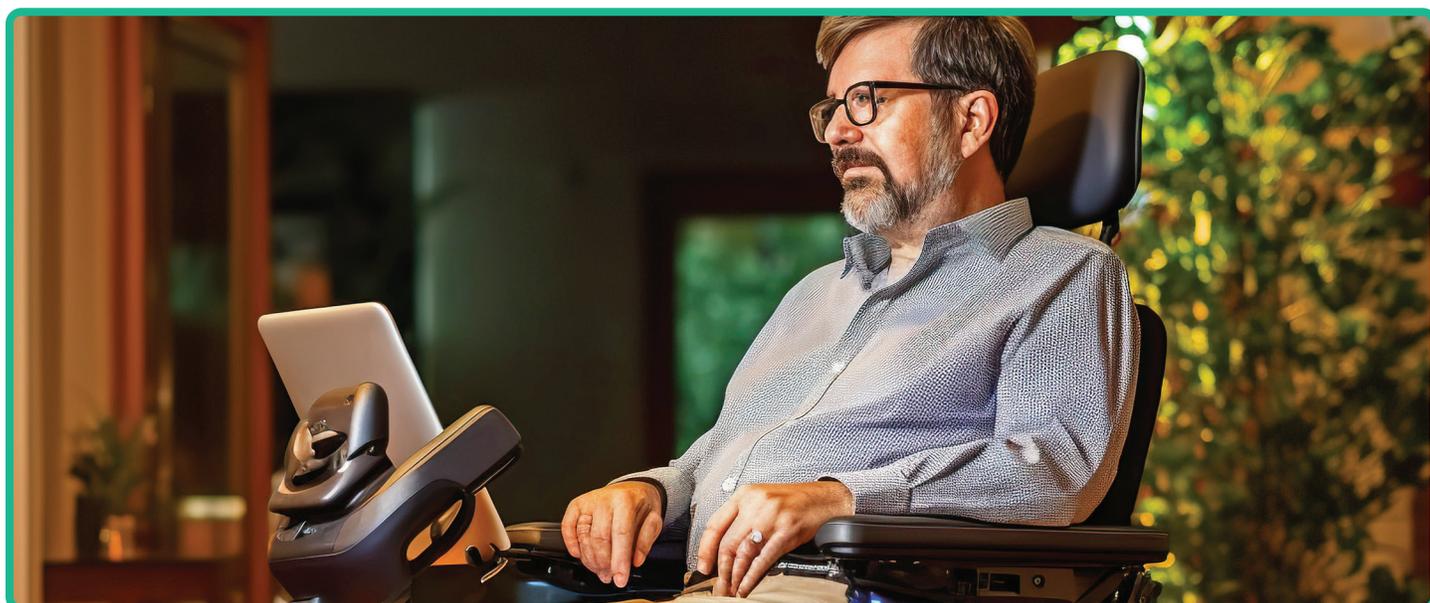
- Show a device replacement is necessary
- Show repairs are reasonable, are necessary, or meet the requirements
- Document labor time adequately
- Show that DMEPOS suppliers must provide repair warranties
- Specify that wheelchair repair costs can't exceed a certain amount over a device's 5-year lifetime



## Resources

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- [2019 Final Rule Affecting Power Mobility Devices](#)
- [42 CFR 410.38](#)
- [Article: Standard Documentation Requirements for All Claims Submitted to DME MACs \(A55426\)](#) for information on how to properly document and bill repairs
- [Article: Power Mobility Devices \(A52498\)](#)
- [Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies \(DMEPOS\) Order and Face-to-Face Encounter Requirements](#)
- [Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Chapter 15](#): Section 110.2 for information on repairs, maintenance, replacement, and delivery
- [Medicare Claims Processing Manual, Chapter 20](#)
- [Medicare Program Integrity Manual, Chapter 5](#): Section 5.10.1 for information on DMEPOS supplier documentation for repair claims
- [Medicare Program Integrity Manual, Chapter 5](#): Section 5.2.2 for information on required elements of an SWO
- [Medicare Provider Compliance Tips: Wheelchair Options & Accessories](#) for information on preventing improper payments for accessories
- [Provider Compliance](#) for information on how to avoid common coverage, coding, and billing errors



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