

SUNY CORTLAND POLICY

PERSONAL ELECTRIC TRANSPORT DEVICES POWERED BY LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES

INCEPTION DATE: JULY 9, 2025

Introduction

This policy is specific to lithium-ion powered personal electric transportation devices and outlines the usage rules and prohibitions associated with these devices.

Devices covered by this policy include all classes of e-bikes, scooters, hoverboards, unicycles, skateboards, one wheels, roller blades, segways, or any other wheeled personal transportation device powered by rechargeable lithium-ion batteries.

Use of these devices will be permitted on campus with restrictions on location of use, charging, and storage.

Policy Rationale (Battery, Charging Systems, and Storage)

It has been well documented that there can be a serious threat to life, health, and property from fires associated with damaged, abused, defective, or substandard batteries and charging systems of these lithium-ion battery powered devices. An unpredictable phenomenon called “Thermal Runaway” is the primary concern that can initiate an uncontrollable self-heating state and overheating of the battery resulting in fire, explosion, and the release of toxic gases. This whole process can occur very quickly with little to no forewarning and can occur at any time whether the device is being charged or simply in storage.

Even with the newly enacted New York legislation (July 2024) requiring batteries and charging systems to comply with safety standards, there are many devices in use that were manufactured prior to this legislation and these devices may not conform to current safety standards.

There is also a personal responsibility component that cannot be effectively monitored to ensure owners are adhering to safe charging and storage protocols.

There are currently no facilities on campus specially designed to house these devices for safe charging and storage.

Based on all the forementioned issues and concerns we have concluded that the risks are simply too great to allow unrestricted use, storage, and charging of personal electric transportation device powered by lithium-ion batteries and have implemented the following regulations for the SUNY Cortland Campus.

Campus Policy

1. The University prohibits the storage or use of personal electric transportation devices powered by lithium-ion batteries inside any building, residence hall or within any other campus structure.
2. Charging of these devices is prohibited at any location on campus property, indoors or outdoors.
3. These devices are permitted to be operated outdoors only on campus property provided users follow all state, local, and campus traffic, pedestrian, and personal safety laws and regulations.
4. These devices are permitted to be temporarily stored (locked) **outdoors only** on campus property in any designated bike rack. These devices are not permitted to be locked or stored on any utility pole, tree, handrail, loading dock, canopy, or at any location that blocks any building egress, ADA ramp, or any other location that impedes pedestrians or emergency responders.

Exemptions

Individuals who require electric personal mobility devices such as wheelchair, scooter, or other device due to an ADA disability, injury or other medical condition supported by medical use need are exempt from regulations 1 and 2 but must adhere to use, charging, and storage rules outlined in this policy if those devices are powered by lithium-ion batteries.

Use and Operation

This section applies to all forms of electric personal mobility devices used on campus property

1. The only individuals permitted to operate, store, and charge electric personal mobility devices **inside buildings or on pedestrian sidewalks** are those who require such devices due to an ADA disability, injury or other medical condition supported by a medical use need (see exemptions).
2. All other users of electric personal mobility devices are restricted to the operation of these devices only on campus roads, bike lanes, driveways, and parking lots.
3. Users should familiarize themselves and conform with all New York State, local, and campus traffic laws specific to the devices they are operating.
4. Do not use devices that are damaged, malfunctioning, user modified, or have batteries that are abnormally hot, hissing, or emitting and type of odor or smoke.

Charging and Storage

This section only applies to individuals exempt from this policy who require to use such devices due to an ADA disability, injury or other condition supported by a medical use need.

Charging:

Charging of batteries will be permitted inside or outside buildings by those exempt from this policy provided the following rules and criteria are followed and met:

- Devices, batteries, and charging equipment must be listed and labeled in accordance with UL2272 or UL2849. Any device lacking these UL listings will not be permitted on campus.
- Any device, battery, or charging equipment on a recall list is prohibited on campus.
- Use only the battery or charger that were designed for that device and that came with the device.
- Charging device must be plugged directly into a wall outlet during charging. Do not use extension cords, power strips or any other multi-prong electrical connection.
- You must always be present while the battery is charging. Do not leave a battery on charge while you are sleeping or not in attendance.
- Do not charge a device at a location that blocks egress pathways.
- When charging is complete unplug the charger from the outlet.
- Do not continue charging the device or battery after it is fully charged.
- Only charge one device or device battery at a time.
- Keep batteries at room temperature. Do not charge at temperatures below 32°F or above 105°F.
- Do not charge any device or battery that is damaged, malfunctioning, or is abnormally hot, hissing, or emitting any type of odor or smoke.
- Do not place any battery in the trash.

Storage

Storage of devices will be permitted inside buildings by those exempt from this policy provided the following rules and criteria are followed and met:

- Never leave a device in storage unattended while charging.
- Do not block pathways, hallways, exits, or stairwells with devices.
- Do not store batteries or devices in direct sunlight or inside hot vehicles.