

Woman seriously injured by electric scooter in Cold Lake



Chantel Downes, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

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Dispatched to the scene was the RCMP's Emergency Response Team (ERT) from Edmonton, the Police Dog Services, as well as the RCMP Air Services. | RCMP

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City of Cold Lake faces growing concerns about electric mobility devices, seeks clarity from provincial government

Chantel Downes, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter Lakeland This Week
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changes to legislation that may be coming up.

With safety concerns on the rise, council wants to ensure local regulations keep pace with emerging technology.

Then, on Oct. 28, a woman was seriously injured along a trail in Cold Lake by what was described as an electric scooter, although police were not positive on the type of scooter involved when Lakeland This Week spoke with an RCMP spokesperson, last week.

City of Cold Lake Mayor Craig Copeland addressed the recent incident that took place on Millennium Trail, speaking with Lakeland This Week and emphasizing the city's concern and commitment to improving safety measures while seeking provincial guidance on regulating new transportation technology - like e-bikes and GIO scooters.

"We heard about the accident first thing in the morning. It's real tragic . . . Everybody's thoughts and prayers are with the poor lady that was struck," said Copeland.

Commenting on the investigation, Copeland stated, "In terms of the details of what transpired, I know the RCMP are investigating it, and we haven't been given any new information on [what] did happen there." He acknowledged the challenge of trail safety, adding, "there's parts of the Millennium Trail that are dark, and it's unfortunate that this happened."

Speaking on the decision to send a letter to the province to clarify regulations around these types of mobility devices, "We've asked the province for some guidance, and so right now we know that we're not the only municipality that's faced with this," said Copeland. "We'll wait for the province's

response to our letter for advisement. . . We'll wait for that before council makes a decision on whether or not we should adopt our own bylaw."

Explaining why council initially raised this issue, Copeland said, "The reason why we brought [this] forward is we had some correspondence from the community concerned about the bikes and the GIO scooter vehicles."

Copeland expressed empathy toward all those involved in the incident, stating, "I'm sure that the operator of the [device] that struck the lady - I'm sure that they weren't intending to do that."

He also extended appreciation for the responders, saying, "We appreciate all the first responders and the work by our local hospital and the emergency air ambulance."

Council discussions

Presenting a draft letter to council on Oct. 22, Andrew Jabs, Manager of Land Use Planning, Development, and Regulatory Services, stated the letter will ask the province how the electric models "fit into the regulatory framework for highway and off-highway vehicles in the province of Alberta."

Council members noted the ambiguity surrounding the classification of GIO models, which may fall under categories such as "mobility aid," "off-highway vehicle," or "miniature vehicle." The classification issue is important because each category operates under different regulations, and there have been increasing encounters from the public regarding the use of these vehicles, according to information from the City of Cold Lake.

During the meeting, Coun. Bob Mattice asked, "When we send a letter like this to a minister, is there a defined or expected time for us to hear back from them?"

Copeland replied, stating, "I don't think there's a standard in government. It really depends on the office and what you're asking, but in most cases, they do write to us, but sometimes they don't."

CAO Kevin Nagoya expressed optimism about the timeline to hear back from the province, saying, "I think the response will be quite in short order. I don't think it will take that long."

Mattice further commented on the topic, saying he has noticed one particular vehicle drive on the sidewalk, then onto the road and onto Millennium Trail, but noted that the coming winters months may solve some of the problems.

In a public statement made after the council meeting, Copeland said, "Mobility aids have come a long way since the traffic laws were created. Some of them are designed to look like small cars, but they don't follow the same rules as cars."

He further explained the challenges presented by the vehicles.

"Technically as a mobility aid, it's allowed on the trails, but people walking and biking are getting honked at by these tiny vehicles, and forced off to the side, which isn't what we want to hear."

The GIO model, resembling a small car, measures nearly two meters in length and 1.3 meters in width, with a maximum speed of 29 km/h. It is fully battery-operated and classified as an enclosed mobility aid.

Copeland noted the potential hazards with the small vehicles, stating, "It could be compared to something like a golf cart. It doesn't go very fast, but it's still almost 700 pounds barreling down the trail. We're starting to see a handful of them around and understand more residents are ordering them."

The mayor added, "We're not the only municipality facing these kinds of encounters, and before we start making any decisions ourselves, we are hoping the province will take a lead, as it's their legislation that needs to be adapted to accommodate this new technology."

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investigated the incident.

The City of Cold Lake issued a public safety announcement around 11:15 a.m. on Monday, urging residents to steer clear of the section between 75 Avenue and 69 Avenue (Museum Way) while emergency responders worked in the area.

The incident occurred at about 8 a.m., and while EMS responded first, police were notified soon after.

The trail reopened around 5 p.m. that evening, with RCMP continuing to investigate the collision.

"Someone was on the trail, and they were hit by an electric scooter," said Cst. Cory Riggs, Public Information Officer for Alberta RCMP, speaking with *Lakeland This Week*. He added the woman was taken by ambulance to hospital and then flown by STARS Air Ambulance to Edmonton for treatment.

The electric vehicle involved in the incident is suspected to be a GIO model. "I can't say 100 per cent sure it was one of those GIO scooters, but that's what we believe it could have been," stated Riggs.

The 40-year-old male operating the scooter stayed at the scene and assisted emergency responders. RCMP are investigating whether criminal charges may be applicable.

"[He] stayed on scene and then helped EMS. We're investigating if it's criminal in nature, but at this time the investigation hasn't got to that point yet, so no clue on if charges will be coming," said Riggs.

Future updates may be released, depending on if charges are laid. The investigation remains ongoing, with RCMP examining the incident to determine any further actions.



About the Author: Chantel Downes, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Chantel Downes is a graduate of The King's University, with a passion for writing and storytelling. Originally from Edmonton, she received her degree in English and has a minor in communications.

[Read more](#)

Publications and notices

The Alberta Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in statements, publications, notices, signs, symbols, emblems, and other representations to the public.

How does the Alberta Human Rights Act protect against discriminatory publications and notices?

The Alberta Human Rights Act prohibits publishing, issuing, or displaying notices in public based on protected grounds that:

- indicate discrimination or intent to discriminate, or
- are likely to expose a person or group of people to hatred or contempt.

The *Act* addresses notices that detest or vilify a group or person. This means a notice that inspires others to have extreme ill-will towards the person or group, or to abuse and consider them unworthy.

Discriminatory notices are often based on hate. In order to balance this right with freedom of expression, the *Act* does not protect against notices that people find personally to be insulting, upsetting, in bad taste, or contrary to their own beliefs.

On this page, “notices” includes all statements, publications, signs, symbols, emblems, and other representations to the public. For example, a notice could be a poster hung in public, a comment in a speech, a newspaper article, and more.

What you need to know

- A person can freely express an opinion on any topic but not publicly in a way that promotes hatred or contempt of others based on a protected ground.
- Protecting freedom of expression is a fundamental principle of human rights, meaning there is a high bar to prove discriminatory notices.
- A person who sees a discriminatory notice can make a complaint to the Commission within one year after the publication date.
- The respondent may be an individual or an organization who authors, publishes, or is connected to the notice.
- A person who experiences a discriminatory notice at work, when accessing goods or services, or with housing can make a complaint under those protected areas too.

Examples of discriminatory notices

Examples of notices that are discriminatory include:

- a newspaper article calling for people to harm members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community
- displaying a burning cross and swastika at an Aryan event
- advertisements on buses promoting vilification of the Muslim community

Not all notices are discrimination under the *Act*, for example:

- displaying a sign or symbol that identifies facilities usually used by one gender. For example, signs for washrooms or changing rooms.
- notices by or for a non-profit organization whose members have the same political or religious beliefs, ancestry, or place of origin. For example, a church poster for its congregants.

- notices that people find personally to be insulting, upsetting, in bad taste, or contrary to their beliefs

Who can make a complaint

Any person who sees a discriminatory notice may make a complaint.

This includes a targeted person or a member of the targeted group.

If you believe a notice is discriminatory, you may choose to take some or all of the following steps to resolve the issue:

1. Find out who made the notice, when it was made, and if it is linked to an organization.
2. Think about whether you feel safe discussing resolution with the person or organization responsible for the notice.
3. If you feel you can discuss resolution with the person or organization responsible, then you may wish to reach out to them in writing. For example, you might write a letter to the editor of the newspaper or send an email to the director of the organization.
4. Make a human rights complaint to the Commission within one year after the publication date.

Who is responsible for the notice

A complaint to the Commission may be against an individual or organization connected to the notice. Those responsible could include:

- the publisher of the notice
- the author of the notice
- the directors, officers, or board members of the publishing company
- those somehow linked to publishing the notice
- a person or business displaying a notice
- someone who caused the notice to be published, issued, or displayed

To be responsible under the *Act*, the respondent does not have to be directly involved in publishing the notice to the public. Someone

who is indirectly involved may still be responsible, depending on the case.

If you are responsible for the notice, you may be liable to pay damages to the targeted person or group, or ordered to take other steps to remedy the situation.

FAQs

Is all hate, racism, harassment, or bullying considered discrimination under the Alberta Human Rights Act?

What can I do about hate, racism, harassment, or bullying incidents?

What is a hate crime?

What does it mean to “likely expose” a person to hatred or contempt? What is the difference between discriminatory notices and defamation? What is freedom of expression? How does the Commission balance eliminating discrimination with the freedom of expression? Can I make a complaint about a sign at work that promotes hatred against a certain group?

Can I make a complaint against a newspaper, magazine, or publication if the author says they are expressing an opinion?

Newsletter

Connect with us

Our vision is a vibrant and inclusive Alberta where the rich diversity of people is celebrated and respected, and where everyone has the opportunity to fully participate in society, free from discrimination.

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About human rights complaints

In Canada, human rights are protected by the Constitution and by federal, provincial and territorial laws. If an individual feels that his or her rights have been violated, they may be able to make a claim under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or bring a complaint under federal, provincial or territorial human rights laws. Depending on the nature of a complaint, it may be filed in a court or through a specialized body created to hear human rights complaints, such as a commission or tribunal.

Provincial and territorial human rights laws share many similarities with the Canadian Human Rights Act. They protect people from discrimination in areas of provincial and territorial jurisdiction, such as restaurants, stores, schools, housing and most workplaces. In many situations, individuals may need to direct complaints to their provincial or territorial human rights agency.

Individuals within Canada may also bring human rights complaints to the United Nations or the Organization of American States, but only after domestic complaint procedures have been tried and failed.

On this page:

- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- The Canadian Human Rights Act
 - Grounds of discrimination
- The Official Languages Act

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been part of Canada's Constitution since 1982. The Charter protects every Canadian's right to be treated equally under the law. It guarantees broad equality rights and other fundamental rights such as the freedom of expression, assembly and religion.

The Charter applies to governments, but not organizations, businesses or people. It protects the rights of all Canadians from violations by laws, policies or actions of governments, including authorities such as the police. For example, if you are arrested without cause, this could be a violation of your rights under the Charter.

Generally, claims under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms must be filed in a court.

The Canadian Human Rights Act

The purpose of the Canadian Human Rights Act is to protect individuals from discrimination. Enacted in 1977, the Act states that all Canadians have the right to equality, equal opportunity, fair treatment and an environment free of discrimination.

Under the Canadian Human Rights Act, Canadians are protected from discrimination and harassment when they are employed by or receive services from:

- the federal government;
- First Nations governments; or
- private companies that are regulated by the federal government, including banks, trucking companies, broadcasters and telecommunications companies.

Grounds of discrimination

Under the Canadian Human Rights Act, there are 11 grounds of discrimination:

- race;
- national or ethnic origin;
- colour;
- religion;
- age;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- marital status;
- family status;
- **disability**; and
- a conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspended.

If an individual feels that they have been the subject of discrimination based on one or more of the 11 grounds, he or she may file a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. In some cases (for example, for federal employees), there may be other tribunals which can hear the complaint.

To find out if you have a valid complaint, you can use the complaint assessment tool or contact the Commission.

Read more about the different stages of the Commission's dispute resolution process.

The Official Languages Act

In Canada, the Official Languages Act establishes the equality of English and French and grants language rights to all individuals. This act applies to federal institutions such as:

- offices;
- crown corporations; and
- federal departments, agencies and businesses acting on their behalf. Certain private companies, like Air Canada, also have language obligations.

The Official Languages Act does not apply to municipalities, provincial government institutions or private companies.

Learn more about official languages rights or get a detailed explanation on the complaint process by consulting Complaints and investigations - Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada.

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