Do You Need a Motorcycle Licence to Rent a Scooter in Greece?

Understanding Greek Licence Rules for Scooter and Moped Rentals

If you are planning a trip to Santorini and want to explore the island on two wheels, the first question that comes to mind is often about the licence. The rules in Greece are straightforward once you know them, but they differ from country to country. The direct answer: for most small scooters and mopeds, a standard car driving licence (category B) is sufficient. For anything larger, you need a motorcycle licence. Let us break down the details so you know exactly what you need before you rent.

What the Law Says in Greece

Greek traffic law distinguishes between light two-wheelers and full motorcycles. The key threshold is engine size and speed capability. A moped (or a low-powered scooter) is defined as a vehicle with an engine capacity of up to 50cc and a maximum design speed of 45 km/h. To drive such a vehicle, you do not need a motorcycle licence. Instead, a driving licence from any EU or EEA country that authorises you to drive a car (category B) is enough. Many non-EU visitors also find that their home car licence is accepted for these small vehicles, but it is always smart to check the specific rules for your country before travelling.

For scooters and motorcycles above 50cc (for example, 125cc models or larger), you must hold a valid motorcycle licence (category A1, A2, or A, depending on the engine size). This is a firm rule. Rental companies will ask to see your licence, and if you do not have the correct one, they will refuse the rental. The police also conduct checks, and driving without the correct licence can lead to fines, your vehicle being impounded, and insurance issues if you have an accident.

How This Applies to Renting on Santorini

Santorini is an island with winding roads, steep hills, and beautiful coastal routes. Many visitors rent a small scooter or a moped because it is an easy way to get around the villages of Fira, Oia, and Pyrgos. For these light vehicles, a car licence is usually all you need. The rental staff at places like easyride-santorini.com will explain the local rules and check your licence before handing over the keys. They are used to dealing with international visitors and know the requirements for each licence type.

If you hold a full car licence from a country outside the EU, it is likely accepted for a 50cc scooter or a moped for up to 6 months after your arrival. After that, an International Driving

Permit (IDP) is generally required. The permit is a translation of your home licence and is recognised in Greece. You can obtain one from your national automobile association before you travel. It is a simple precaution that avoids any confusion at the rental counter.

What About an ATV or Quad Bike?

ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) are popular on Santorini, especially for groups. The rules for an ATV are similar to those for a scooter: if the ATV has an engine of 50cc or less, a car licence is enough. Many ATVs rented to tourists are larger than 50cc, so you may need a motorcycle licence or a specific category for quad bikes. In Greece, quad bikes are classified as vehicles with four wheels and a maximum design speed of 45 km/h if they are light. For larger ones, a full driving licence (car or motorcycle) is needed. Check with the rental company about the specific vehicle you are renting. They will tell you exactly what licence you need for that model.

Practical Tips for Renting a Scooter in Santorini Greece

Before you book, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Bring your physical driving licence. Photocopies or photos on your phone are not accepted. A licence must be valid and in the same name as your passport.
- If your licence is not in English or Greek, an International Driving Permit is strongly advised. Some rental companies insist on it for non-EU licences.
- Check the minimum age. For a 50cc scooter, you usually need to be at least 18 years old. For a larger scooter, the age may be 21 or higher. The rental company will confirm.
- Ask about insurance. Third-party insurance is mandatory, but you may want to add collision damage waiver (CDW) for extra peace of mind. Read the terms carefully.
- Wear a helmet. Greek law requires both the driver and the passenger to wear a helmet. Rental companies provide them, but you may bring your own if you prefer.

Common Misunderstandings

Some visitors assume that a moped or a small scooter is so light that no licence is needed at all. That is not correct. A driving licence is always required, even for a 50cc scooter. Another common mistake is thinking that a motorbike licence from home automatically allows you to drive any motorcycle abroad. It does, but only within the same category. For example, if your home licence is for up to 125cc, you cannot drive a 500cc motorcycle in Greece without the higher category. Always check with the rental company about the specific vehicle you intend to drive.

What If You Don't Have the Right Licence?

If you do not hold a car or motorcycle licence, you cannot legally rent a two-wheeler in Greece. There is no loophole. Some tourists try to rent an electric bicycle or a small scooter that does not require a licence, but even those may have power restrictions. For genuine zero-licence mobility, consider public transport, taxis, or private transfers. Santorini has a good bus network connecting the main towns, and ridesharing apps are available. Alternatively, walking tours of Fira or Oia are a wonderful way to see the caldera without worrying about traffic or licences.

Checking the Rules Before You Travel

Because licence rules can change and because they differ by country, it is wise to verify with official sources before your trip. The Greek Ministry of Transport website or the local traffic police in Santorini can give you the current regulations. Another reliable way is to speak directly with a rental company. They deal with this every day and can tell you exactly what is needed for your specific licence. For example, the team at easyride-santorini.com can answer questions about licence types, age requirements, and insurance options. They will also explain the local driving etiquette, such as priority on narrow roads and parking rules in towns like Perissa or Pyrgos.

The Bottom Line

To rent a scooter in Santorini, Greece, you need a valid driving licence. For a small scooter (50cc or less), a car licence is enough. For anything larger, you need a motorcycle licence. An International Driving Permit is a good idea if your licence is from outside the EU. Always bring the physical card, wear a helmet, and check the rental terms. With the right paperwork, exploring the island on two wheels is a fantastic way to see the white-washed villages, the black sand beaches, and the sunset views from Oia. Plan ahead, and you will have a smooth and enjoyable experience.