



CMSP: Web Site of California's Official  
Motorcycle Safety and Training  
Program

# MOTORCYCLES, *Motorized* BICYCLES, & *Motorized* SCOOTERS, POCKET BIKES



CHP policy  
Enforcement guidelines regarding  
other modes of transportation  
contained in HPM 100.38, Chapter 4

CMSP is sponsored and administered by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) pursuant to California Vehicle Code, Section 2931, which established the program in 1986.

This publication is a brief synopsis of the California Vehicle Code and related codes. The contents are designed to facilitate a quick reference and should not be considered a complete statute. Users should refer to the specific code(s) if more detailed information is required.



## MOTORCYCLES

**Motorcycle** - has a seat or saddle for the use of the rider, and is designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground.

Section 400 (a) CVC.

- Two-wheeled motorcycles require an M-1 endorsement.
- Three-wheeled motorcycles and/or sidecar require only a Class C license, per Section 12804.9 CVC.
- DOT-compliant helmet required.



**Motor-Driven Cycle** - is a motorcycle with a motor that displaces less than 150cc. Section 405 CVC.

- Two-wheeled motor-driven cycle requires an M-1 endorsement.
- Three-wheeled motor-driven cycle requires a Class C license.
- DOT-compliant helmet required.

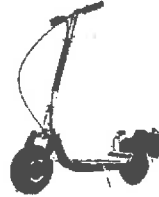
### VEHICLE CODE SECTIONS PERTAINING TO MOTORCYCLES

- I 5200b **ONE LICENSE PLATE ISSUED**, rear installation required when only one plate is issued.
- I 5201 **IMPROPERLY MOUNTED LICENSE PLATE**, secure, horizontal mounting and clearly visible. (Refer to code.)
- I 12500b **LICENSED DRIVER, OUT OF CLASS**, or no endorsement to operate two-wheel motorcycle. (Refer to code for exemptions.)
- I 12509.5c **USE OF INSTRUCTION PERMIT**, shall not drive motorcycle during darkness, on a freeway, or with a passenger.
- I 22107 **UNSAFE TURN OR LANE CHANGE WITHOUT APPROPRIATE SIGNAL**, prohibited.
- I 22108 **TURNING WITHOUT SIGNALING**, during last 100 feet.
- I 22110a,b **HAND/LAMP SIGNAL NOT GIVEN**, signal lamp to be used unless vehicle not required to and not equipped with turn signals. (Refer to code.)
- I/C 22502a **PARALLEL/CURB PARKING**, one wheel or fender must touch curb.
- I 24253b **BATTERY**, capable of keeping taillamp on for 15 min. if engine stops. Applies to vehicles manufactured after 01/01/1971.
- I 24600a **TAILLAMP**, must have one taillamp.
- I 24600e **RED TAILLAMP**, must be red and visible for 1,000 feet. If vehicle manufactured before 01/01/1969, must be visible for 500 feet.
- I 24603a **STOPLAMPS**, one or more stoplamps are required.
- I 24607a **REAR REFLECTORS**, must have one reflector, visible at night from 100 to 350 feet.
- I 24951b4 **LAMP-TYPE TURN SIGNAL**, turn signal required if manufactured after 01/01/1973.

- I 25251.2 **MODULATED HEADLAMP**, prohibited during darkness.
- I 25650.5 **HEADLAMPS**, motorcycles manufactured after 01/01/1978 must have 1 and not more than 2 headlamps which light up when the engine is started, and remain lit as long as the engine is running.
- I 26101a **MODIFIED LIGHTING - SELL**, prohibited to sell device to modify original design or performance of lighting safety glazing material or other device (includes illegal light covers).
- I 26101b **MODIFIED LIGHTING - USE**, prohibited to use vehicle with installed device to modify original design or performance of lighting safety glazing material or other device (includes illegal light covers).
- I 26311a **BRAKES**, front and rear brakes required on motorcycles manufactured after 01/01/1966. (Refer to code for exemptions.)
- I 26453 **BRAKES**, all maintained in good condition and in good working order.
- I 26701c **GLAZING MATERIAL**, if windshield has glazing material, it must be safety glazing material. Applies to motorcycles manufactured after 01/01/1969.
- I 26701d **TINTED WIND DEFLECTOR**, no red, blue, or amber wind deflector.
- I 26708a1 **WINDSHIELD APPLICATION - MATERIAL PROHIBITED**, any object or material placed, displayed, installed, affixed, or applied upon the windshield.
- I 26709a **MIRROR**, must have one which enables the driver to see 200 feet to the rear.
- I 27150a **ADEQUATE MUFFLER**, excessive exhaust noise.
- I 27150b **ADEQUATE MUFFLER**, loud off road vehicles.
- I/M 27150.1 **ILLEGAL EXHAUST**, selling, installing.
- I 27151a **MODIFICATION OF EXHAUST SYSTEM**, prohibited.
- I 27400 **HEADSETS AND EARPLUGS IN BOTH EARS**, prohibited. (Refer to code for exemptions.)
- I 27800 **PASSENGERS**, must sit to rear or ride in a side car. Requires a securely attached seat and footrest. Feet must be on footrest while such vehicle is in motion.
- I 27801a **SEAT**, must be so positioned that driver, when seated, can touch the ground with feet.
- I 27801b **HANDLEBARS**, must be so positioned that the driver's hands are no more than 6 inches above shoulder height.
- I 27803b **MANDATORY HELMET LAW**, unlawful to operate motorcycle, motor-driven cycle, or motorized bicycle, if driver or any passenger is not wearing a helmet meeting FMVSS 218. (Except motorized bicycles as specified in 406(b). See page 4.)
- I 27803c **MANDATORY HELMET LAW**, unlawful to ride as passenger if driver or any passenger is not wearing a helmet which meets requirements of FMVSS 218.

### **MOTORIZED SCOOTERS**

**Motorized Scooter** - a two-wheeled device with handlebars and a floorboard designed to be stood upon when riding, that is powered by an electric motor. May also have a driver seat that does not interfere with the ability of the rider to stand and ride. May also be designed to be powered by human propulsion. Section 407.5 (a) CVC.



- Requires a Class C license.
- Bicycle helmet required.

### **VEHICLE CODES PERTAINING TO MOTORIZED SCOOTERS**

- I 21212a **BICYCLE HELMET REQUIRED**, under 18 years old.
- M 21221.5 **DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE**, no person may operate a motorized scooter upon a highway while under the influence of an alcoholic beverage or any drug.
- I 21223a-c **MOTORIZED SCOOTER OPERATED DURING DARKNESS**, refer to code.
- I 21226b **MUFFLER REQUIRED**, a motorized scooter shall at all times be equipped with a muffler.
- I 21226d **EXHAUST MODIFICATION**, the exhaust system shall not be modified in a manner that will amplify or increase the noise level.
- I 21227b **OPERATION REQUIREMENT**, it is unlawful for a scooter to be operated that does not meet one of the following: operate in a manner so that the electric motor is disengaged or ceases to function when the brakes are applied or operate in a manner so that the motor is engaged through a switch or mechanism that, when released, will cause the electric motor to disengage or cease to function.
- I 21228a,b **RIGHT CURB/ROADWAY EDGE**, failure to operate as close as possible to right curb/roadway edge and walk scooter across street when turning left.
- I 21229a,b **WITHIN BICYCLE LANE**, any person operating a motorized scooter upon the roadway shall ride within an established bicycle lane.
- I 21235 **MOTORIZED SCOOTER PROHIBITED OPERATIONS**, the operator of a motorized scooter shall not: (a) operate a motorized scooter unless it is equipped with a brake, (b) operate a motorized scooter on a highway with a speed limit in excess of 25 miles per hour unless operated within a Class II bicycle lane, (c) operate a motorized scooter without wearing a properly fitted and fastened bicycle helmet meeting the requirements of Section 21212 VC, (d) operate a motorized scooter without a valid driver license or instruction permit, (e) carry any passengers in addition to the operator, (f) carry any package, bundle, or article that prevents the operator from keeping at least one hand upon the handlebars, (g) operate a motorized

scooter upon a sidewalk, except as may be necessary to enter or leave adjacent property, (h) operate a motorized scooter with handlebars requiring the rider's hands to be elevated above the level of their shoulders, (i) leave a motorized scooter on a sidewalk in any manner that does not allow adequate path for pedestrian traffic, (j) attach the motorized scooter nor him/herself by any means to any vehicle on the roadway. (Refer to Section 22411 CVC for maximum speed limit.)

- I 22411 **MAXIMUM SPEED**, no person shall operate a motorized scooter in excess of 15 mph.

### POCKET BIKES



**Pocket Bike** - a two-wheeled motorized device that has a seat or saddle, and not designed or manufactured for highway use. Section 473 (a) CVC.

### VEHICLE CODE SECTIONS PERTAINING TO POCKET BIKES AND MOTORIZED BICYCLES

- I 21720 **OPERATE ON PRIVATE PROPERTY ONLY.**
- I 21721a **IMPOUND AUTHORITY**, for a pocket bike if operated in violation of 21720 CVC. Hold 48 hours minimum. (Refer to code.)
- I 21968 **MOTORIZED SKATEBOARD**, operate on private property only.

### MOPEDS OR MOTORIZED BICYCLES

**Moped** - a two or three-wheeled device with fully operative pedals for propulsion by human power, or having no pedals if: 1) powered solely by electric energy, 2) has an automatic transmission, 3) has a motor which produces less than two gross brake horsepower, and 4) has a maximum speed of 30 mph on level ground. Section 406 (a) CVC.

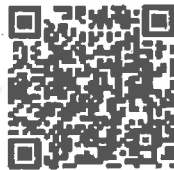
- Requires an M-1 or M-2 endorsement.
- DOT-compliant helmet required.



**Motorized Bicycle** - has fully operative pedals for propulsion by human power and an electric motor that: 1) produces less than 1,000 watt output, 2) is incapable of a speed greater than 20 mph on level ground, and 3) is incapable of further increasing speed beyond 20 mph using human power in conjunction with the electric motor.  
Section 406 (b) CVC.

- Not a motor vehicle. (No insurance, license, or registration required.)
- Rider required to be 16 years of age or older.
- Bicycle helmet required.

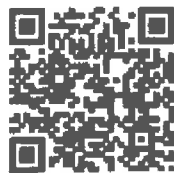
- I 23135 **MODIFIED MOTORIZED BICYCLES**, operating when modified.
- I 23330b **VEHICULAR CROSSING**, unauthorized use.
- J I 24015a **MOTORIZED BICYCLE EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS**, headlamp, taillamp, stoplamp, side/rear reflectors, and adequate brakes.
- J I 24015b **MOTORIZED BICYCLE EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS**, mirror, horn, and muffler.
- J I 24016a **ELECTRIC MOTORIZED BICYCLE**, (1) comply with equipment and manufacturing requirements for bicycles or requirements for motor-driven cycles, and (2) electric motor disengages when brake is applied or switch mechanism is released.
- J I 24016b1 **ELECTRIC MOTORIZED BICYCLE**, operator must wear bicycle helmet meeting requirements of Section 21212 CVC.
- J I 24016b4 **ELECTRIC MOTORIZED BICYCLE**, operator must be 16 years of age or older.
- J I 24016c **ELECTRIC MOTORIZED BICYCLE**, modification to increase speed prohibited.



CHP 888



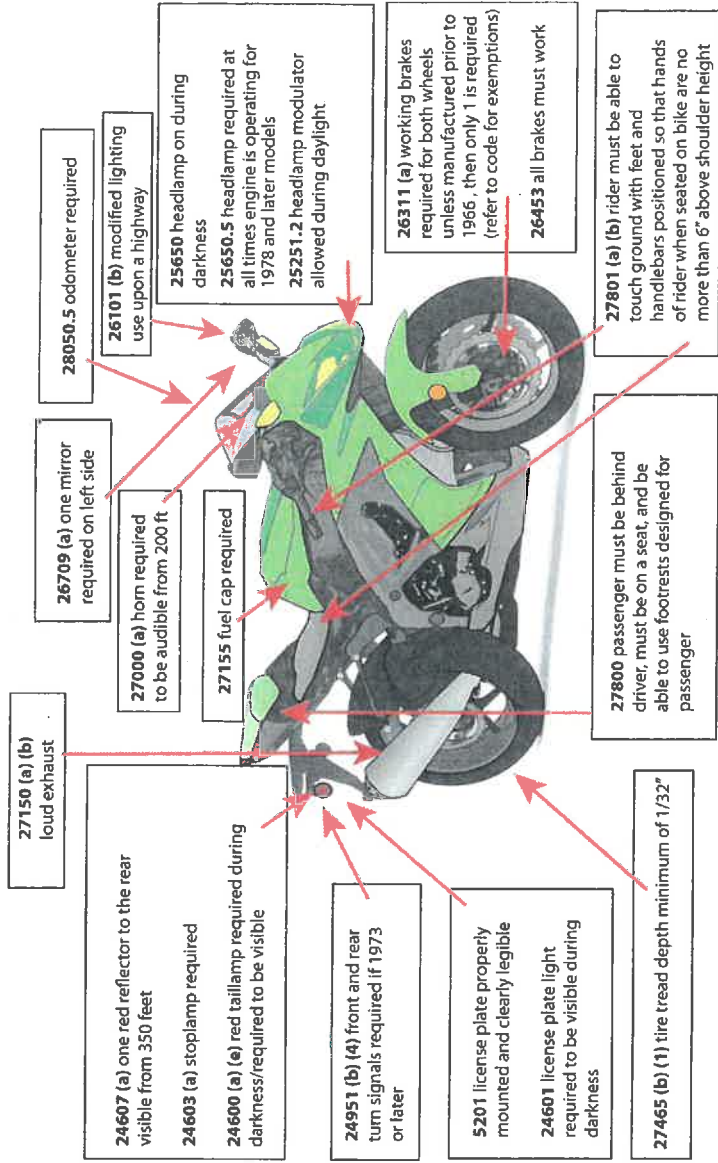
Motorcycles and  
Similar Vehicles



CHP YouTube Channel



How to  
Identify Unsafe  
Motorcycle Helmets





To find out more information about the  
California Motorcyclist Safety Program (CMSP), go to:  
<http://www.chp.ca.gov/programs/motorcycle.html>

**SPECIAL NOTATIONS** The following notations are used in  
conjunction with appropriate code sections:  
M = Misdemeanor I = Infraction C = Subject to civil process