

E-bikes are Electrifying the Future!

What Parents Should Know...



BUT, is your child experienced enough to manage the increased speeds and maneuverability of a heavy E-bike?

Parents are advised to do their own research and assess their children's cycling capabilities before purchasing one. Below are some considerations to help parents make informed decisions.

- 1. Heavy E-bikes traveling at high speeds are harder to maneuver and take longer to stop.**
The average speed of a standard bicyclist is 12 mph. Type 1 & 2 ebikes can travel up to 20 mph (Type 3- 28 mph). This is a significant difference when considering the experience level of student E-bike riders.
- 2. E-bike riders (and all cyclists) must follow the same rules as vehicles when riding on roadways.**

[California Vehicle Code \(CVC\) §21230](#)

E-bikes are rapidly increasing in popularity, especially with teens as they provide increased independence. E-bikes allow children to travel further and faster, allowing steep hills to be easily climbed. Heavy school books and sports equipment are no longer an issue to transport!

One less vehicle on the road benefits all.

Is your child experienced with the following?

- Taking turns with vehicles at intersections after coming to a complete stop
- Riding predictably WITH the flow of traffic and does not weave in and out of vehicles
- Riding outside of the door zone of parked vehicles (at least 3 feet away)
- Using hand signals for turning right, left and stopping, and scans before merging onto roads and changing lanes
- Obeying posted speeds on pathways and giving pedestrians the right of way
- Knowing how to stop abruptly and dodge obstacles without swerving into vehicle lanes
- Committed to wearing a helmet and ensuring their passenger does as well (17 and under are required to do so by law)

Riding confidently on roads and pathways takes practice

Parents, or another experienced adult cyclist, are advised to ride with children to ensure they are following the rules of the road and can handle the bicycle in various road conditions. With E-bikes, this includes extra practice – riding responsibly and under control at all times, including switching between gears and speed settings.



**SAFE ROUTES
TO SCHOOLS**
MARIN COUNTY

Types of E-bikes

According to CVC 312.5 (a), legal e-bikes must have:

1. Working pedals
2. Maximum of 750 watts
3. Throttle that can never, ever be altered or switched to exceed a maximum speed of 20 mph on motor power alone (e.g. no “out of class” mode allowed on legal Class 2)
4. A label on the e-bike designating the Class

BUYER BEWARE: Many brands sold in California as Class 2 are e-motorcycles, not legal e-bikes. These e-motorcycles can easily be switched to speeds exceeding 20 mph on throttle power alone, making them illegal to ride on public roads and pathways. Check the manufacturer’s website for specifications that abide by California law CVC 312.5 (a).

→ **CLASS 1:** Pedal-assist; no throttle; no age limit. Travels up to 20 mph. Recommended by professionals providing the parent believes their student has the experience and ability to maneuver a heavier and faster e-bike.

→ **CLASS 2:** Throttle e-bikes, no pedaling required up to 20 mph. No age limit. However, many brands labeled Class 2 do not abide by CA law; they can exceed 20 mph on throttle power alone in an “unlimited” or “out of class” mode. These e-motorcycles are not legal on public roads or pathways, even with a Class 2 sticker.

→ **CLASS 3:** 28 mph max; power assist; no throttle. Must be at least 16 years of age. No drivers license is required. All riders must wear a helmet. Local jurisdictions may restrict their use on multi-use paths.

E-Scooter Laws

- California’s law permits anyone OVER the age of 15, who has a learner’s permit or license, to operate an e-scooter
- E-scooter riders must know traffic laws, because they must share the road with vehicles
- Users can ride in bike lanes on the road if the posted speed limit is 25 mph or slower
- California law prohibits riding e-scooters on sidewalks and pathways unless marked otherwise



Additional Resources

[Learn more about e-bike safety from Marin Safe Routes to Schools](#)

- Includes information for parents, students, and school administrators
- Provides FAQs about legal Class 2 e-bikes versus e-motorcycles sold as e-bikes.



[12-minute e-bike safety video from Pedal Ahead](#)

- An easy-to-follow introductory video all about e-bike safety, including maintenance needs for batteries and brakes.



[PeopleForBikes and League of American Bicyclists: E-Bike Smart training videos](#)

- A comprehensive on-line training about e-bike safety including the laws and safety tips applicable for all cyclists. Education includes five six-minute videos.
- Safe Routes to Schools uses League-certified curriculum in classes taught at Marin schools.



[E-bike Safety Training by CHP](#)

- Expect to spend an hour on this comprehensive training which is mostly text and graphics. Highly recommend that youth complete this training with an adult.



[For questions and further support, please contact \[saferroutes@marinbike.org\]\(mailto:saferroutes@marinbike.org\)](#)