

E-BIKES ARE ELECTRIFYING THE FUTURE!

What Parents Should Know...

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. But, consider the following...

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 an e-bike. Below are some considerations to help parents make informed decisions.

- **E-bikes are heavier and faster than regular bikes**, which makes them harder to control and stop—especially for new riders. This can lead to more serious crashes if not handled carefully.
- The average speed of a **standard bicyclist is 12 mph. Class 1 and 2 e-bikes can travel up to 20 mph (Class 3- 28 mph)**. This is a significant difference when considering the experience level of youth e-bike riders.
- E-bike riders (and all cyclists) **must follow the same rules as vehicles** when riding.

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**, not weaving in and out of vehicles
- Riding **outside of the door zone** – at least 5 feet from parked cars
- Using **hand signals** to turn, stop, and change lanes safely
- Following **speed limits** and being courteous to **pedestrians**
- **Stopping quickly** and avoiding obstacles without swerving into traffic
- **Wearing a helmet** (required for under 18 or any passengers)
- **Staying off their phone** while riding



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 cycling 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.

Information on this flyer is provided courtesy of Marin County Safe Routes to School Program.

Types of E-bikes

Class I

20 mph max with **only pedal-assist**, no throttle. These e-bikes are legal on any paved surface where a regular bike can ride.

Class II

20 mph max with pedal-assist and a powerful **throttle function** that negates the need to pedal. These e-bikes are legal on any paved surface that a regular bike is allowed to operate at the posted speed.

CAUTION! Some vehicles are mislabeled as Class II e-bikes. **Legal e-bikes have:**

1. A motor with a 750 watt max (or less)
2. Safety features that prevent speeds over 20 mph (even with throttle use)
3. Working pedals

*NOTE: Class I and Class II e-bikes **currently don't have a minimum age restriction** and are allowed on multi-use pathways unless otherwise specified.*

Class III

28 mph max, only pedal-assist, no throttle. This class is a tier below true motorcycles and mopeds. Riders must be **16 or older** and **wear a helmet at all times** regardless of age. They are prohibited from multi-use paths unless otherwise specified.

E-Scooter Laws

- Riders need a **learner's permit or driver's license**. E-scooter riders must know traffic laws because they must share the road with vehicles.
- Users can ride in **bike lanes and on roads** where the posted speed limit is 25 mph or slower.
- The speed limit for e-scooters on all roads is **15 mph**, however, many e-scooters are capable of achieving speeds well beyond 15 mph.
- California law **prohibits riding e-scooters on sidewalks and multi use pathways** unless marked otherwise.



Additional Resources

E-Bike Handbook for Parents and Students

- For more details about safety, laws, maintenance, storage, and best riding practices



12-minute E-Bike Safety Video by Pedal Ahead

- An easy to follow introductory video all about e-bike safety



E-Bike Safety Training by CHP

- Expect to spend about an hour on this comprehensive training. Highly recommended that youth complete this training with an adult. Those who complete the course can print out a certificate



Safe Routes to School Website

For questions and further support, please contact srts@smcoe.org.



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