

# E-BICYCLES WHAT PARENTS MUST KNOW

## CONSIDERING *an E-BIKE for* YOUR CHILD/TEEN? THINK ABOUT THESE QUESTIONS/FACTORS WHEN PLANNING *a PURCHASE.*

- Does the device fit my child/teen's size and ability?
- Is your child/teen a skilled rider who knows and follows the traffic rules (see sidebar at right)?
- Can your child/teen stand up to peer pressure?
- Is your child/teen committed to wearing a helmet and ensuring their passenger does as well (17 and under are required to do so by law)?
- Buy local so they're guaranteed to be assembled properly and can be taken in for regular maintenance, especially for brakes.
- Check the label (must not exceed 750 watts/20mph).

**PRACTICE FIRST:** Ride with your child/teen to ensure they are following the rules of the road and can handle the bicycle in various road conditions. They should be riding confidently, responsibly and under control at all times, including switching between gears and speed settings.



### TRAFFIC RULES

- ✓ Rides predictably WITH the flow of traffic
- ✓ Rides outside the door zone of parked vehicles (3 ft away)
- ✓ Stops at stop signs and takes turns with vehicles
- ✓ Uses hand signals for turning and scans before merging onto roads and changing lanes
- ✓ Obeys posted speedways on pathways and yields to pedestrians



### PROS

- ✓ Allows riders to travel further and faster
- ✓ Allows steep hills to be easily climbed
- ✓ Heavy school books and/or sports equipment may be easier to transport
- ✓ May encourage more independent riding, less vehicles on the road benefits all

### CONS

- ✓ Traveling at higher speeds (20mph is twice the speed of a normal pedal bike) makes it harder to control and stop
- ✓ Weigh more than normal bikes. Less maneuverable and difficult to transport/store
- ✓ Maintenance can be challenging & costs higher due to electrical components, battery (\$100-\$300/annually vs. \$0-\$100 for a normal pedal bike)
- ✓ Less cardiovascular benefit than regular bikes
- ✓ More expensive to purchase compared to pedal bikes
- ✓ Target for thieves
- ✓ Environmental considerations related to battery production and disposal



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## CLASSES of E-BIKES

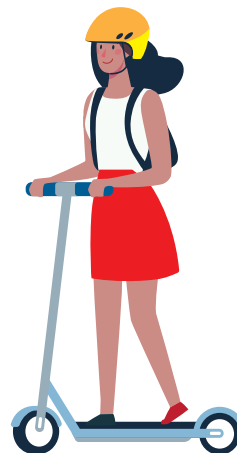
Class	Top Assisted Speed	Motor Control
Class 1	20 mph	Pedal only
Class 2	20 mph	Pedal & Throttle
Class 3	28 mph	Pedal only

**BUYER BEWARE:** Although Class 2 Bicycles have become readily available at a lower price point than Class 1 & Class 3 bikes, they can be easily hacked to speeds exceeding 20mph on throttle power alone, making them illegal to ride on public roads and pathways, and even more dangerous.

According to California Law, legal e-bikes must have:

- Working pedals
- Max of 750 watts
- Throttle that can never, ever be altered or switched to exceed a max speed of 20mph on motor power alone
- A label on the e-bike designating the class

**If purchasing a Class 2 e-bicycle for your child/teen, consider disabling the throttle and/or establishing rules about not adjusting the throttle speed under any circumstance.**



## E-SCOOTER LAWS

- To legally operate an e-scooter in CA, one **must be over the age of 16 with a learner's permit, or a driver's license**
- California law prohibits riding e-scooters on sidewalks and pathways unless marked otherwise
- Riders must share the road with vehicles; may ride in bicycle lanes

**Have questions or need e-bicycle safety training support?** Contact the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition/Safe Routes to School Program at [saferoutes@bikesonoma.org](mailto:saferoutes@bikesonoma.org) or 707-545-0153. [www.sonomasaferroutes.org](http://www.sonomasaferroutes.org)



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## RESOURCES



**Sonoma County SRTS E-Bike FAQ** includes information for parents, students, and school administrators



**12 Minute E-Bike Safety Video from Pedal Ahead** An easy to follow introductory video all about e-bike safety, including including maintenance needs for batteries & brakes



**E-Bike Safety Training by CHP** 1 hour, comprehensive training, highly recommend youth complete this training with an adult



**The Caring Parent's E-Bike Survival Guide by Beth Black** (available for purchase)