# A Parent's Guide to E-Bike Safety

**KNOW ● PREPARE ● RIDE SAFELY**



- Understand e-bike classifications
- Is your child ready to ride?
- Learn the rules for safer riding
- Make a family safety plan

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

**Injury Prevention Program**

# Parents and Caregivers

**E-bikes can be a fun and convenient way for young people to get around. Because they are heavier and can travel faster than regular bikes, riding one safely takes skill and practice.**

**This guide will help you understand what your child is riding, decide whether they are ready, understand the rules of the road, and make a plan together before they ride on their own.**

Talk about safety. Practice together. Make a plan.

## Before You Buy or Ride

- Check the label for class, motor power, and top speed.
- Check manufacturer age restrictions and where it can legally be ridden.
- Make sure the e-bike fits your child and they can handle the size and weight.
- Avoid bikes with “unlock” or off-road modes. Bikes that can exceed legal limits are not e-bikes.
- Never modify an e-bike to exceed legal speed or motor power limits.

# Know What Your Child is Riding

**E-bikes** can reach higher speeds with little physical effort. Before choosing one for your child, understand the different classes, motor power, speed limits, helmet laws, and intended use.



**CLASS 1:**
**PEDAL ASSIST**
MAX 20 MPH
HELMET REQUIRED
UNDER 18



**CLASS 2:**
**THROTTLE ASSIST**
MAX 20 MPH
HELMET REQUIRED
UNDER 18



**CLASS 3:**
**PEDAL ASSIST**
MAX 28 MPH
16+ YEARS OLD TO RIDE
HELMET REQUIRED FOR ALL AGES

**All three classes require working pedals and an electric motor of 750 watts or less.**

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**E-motos are NOT e-bikes and are NOT street legal!**



## E-MOTO (Off-Highway Electric Motorcycle)

- Not permitted on public streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, or public paths and trails
- Designed for off-highway use only
- No manufacturer-provided pedals
- Motorcycle helmet required
- Illegal street use may result in tickets or impoundment

**DID YOU KNOW?**
**E-SCOOTERS HAVE DIFFERENT RULES!**

In California, e-scooter riders must have a driver's license or learner's permit. Scooters aren't allowed on sidewalks, and riders under 18 must wear a helmet.



# Safer Riding Basics



## Passengers

- Only carry a passenger if the bike is designed for one and has a passenger seat.
- On Class 3 e-bikes, California law requires helmets on both riders and passengers.



## Where to Ride

- Ride in the same direction as traffic.
- Use bike lanes when available.
- Sidewalk, path, and trail rules vary by location and e-bike class.



## Signs & Signals

- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Come to a complete stop at stop signs and red lights.
- Look before turning and use hand signals.
- Yield to pedestrians.



## Safety

- Wear a properly fitted and fastened helmet.
- California law requires helmets for riders under 18 and for everyone on a Class 3 e-bike.
- Put away phones and devices while riding.
- Be visible. Use lights and reflectors at night and wear bright or reflective clothing.

# Is Your Child Ready for an E-Bike?

**The Consumer Product Safety Commission advises that children under 12 not ride e-bikes, and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends Class 1 only for ages 12 to 15.** Age alone does not mean a child is ready. Use this checklist to assess whether they have the skills and judgment to ride safely.

## Before Your Child Rides Ask:

- [ ] Can they confidently handle an e-bike's weight and speed?
- [ ] Can they start, stop, turn, and look back without swerving?
- [ ] Can they use hand signals and obey traffic signs?
- [ ] Can they stay focused and watch for opening car doors?
- [ ] Can they ride predictably with traffic?
- [ ] Do they know where they are allowed to ride?
- [ ] Will they wear a helmet every time?










# Before They Ride: Family Safety Plan

Talk about these topics together and practice before they ride on their own.



- **Practice together** away from traffic until they can confidently start, stop, turn, signal and control their speed.
- **Choose a familiar routes with** bike lanes, safe crossings, and safe places to stop.
- **Agree on where they can ride** and what to do if the route changes.



- **Make sure their helmet fits** and is buckled on every ride.
- **Use lights and reflective or bright clothing.**
- **Before each ride, check** the brakes, tires, battery, and lights.



- **Agree on whether passengers are allowed**.
- **Agree to put phones and other distractions away** while riding.
- **Decide how they will contact you** if they feel unsafe, have a problem, or need help.

Ask each other: “What will you do if...?”
Use the answer to guide another practice ride before independent riding.



# Resources

## THE RIGHT FIT PROTECTS YOU.

3 STEPS FOR A SAFE FIT




**SHAKE TEST**

Your helmet should NOT move when you shake your head.

**NEED A HELMET?**

No-cost bicycle helmets and fittings for SLO County residents.

**REQUEST A SAFETY PRESENTATION**

Bike and e-bike safety presentations for schools, community groups, and events.

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

Explore local resources, safety tips, and e-bike laws.

slocounty.gov/EBikeSafety



WWW.SLOCOUNTY.GOV/EBIKESAFETY

805-781-4944

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

OTS CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

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