E-BIKES: KNOW THE LAWS

WHAT AN E-BIKE IS:

ALL E-BIKES
The motor must be less than 750 watts. E-bike top speeds are capped at 28 mph, unless the bike has a throttle. In that case, the maximum speed is limited to 20 mph. Once the maximum speed is reached, the motor must shut off. Working pedals are required.

CLASS 1 E-BIKES
Class 1 e-bikes have a maximum speed of 20 mph. Their motors use pedal assist, meaning the motor stops when the rider stops pedaling. Class 1 e-bikes may be ridden on paths and trails without requiring local permission.

CLASS 2 E-BIKES
Class 2 e-bikes have a maximum speed of 20 mph and are equipped with a throttle. They may also include pedal assist. When the bike reaches its maximum speed, the motor shuts off. Class 2 e-bikes are allowed on surfaced paths and trails; access to natural surface paths and trails depends on local ordinances.

CLASS 3 E-BIKES
Class 3 e-bikes have a maximum speed of 28 mph and operate using pedal assist. They must be equipped with a speedometer. Children under 16 are not allowed to ride Class 3 e-bikes, except as passengers (if the bike is designed to carry one). Class 3 e-bikes are not permitted on multi-use trails.

WHAT AN E-BIKE ISN'T:

NOT ALL ELECTRIC VEHICLES ARE CONSIDERED E-BIKES
E-bikes must fall into one of the three defined classes. If a vehicle does not meet the criteria for any of these classes, it is not considered an e-bike. Electric scooters are not the same as e-bikes and are subject to different regulations. Be sure to know the rules for the type of vehicle you are riding.

IS IT AN E-BIKE OR A MOTOR-DRIVEN CYCLE?
Motor-driven cycles are vehicles with motors rated at 3,700 watts or less. Bicycles with motors exceeding 749 watts are most likely classified as motor-driven cycles and are not considered e-bikes. Motor-driven cycles are subject to different regulations and should not be treated as e-bikes.

MODIFICATION MATTERS
E-bikes may not be modified in ways that take them out of compliance with state law. Any changes, such as adding a mechanical button, altering the software that controls the electric drive system, using an app, or making other modifications that don't comply with state law will result in the vehicle no longer being classified as an e-bike.

SPEED
Under Connecticut law, e-bikes are limited to a maximum speed of either 20 or 28 mph, depending on their class. Vehicles that exceed these speeds are not considered e-bikes and should not be treated as such. Similarly, e-bikes that are modified to exceed these speed limits are no longer considered e-bikes.

Per Connecticut state law, all e-bike riders are required to wear a helmet. It's important to choose one that is rated for the speed your e-bike can reach. Since e-bikes travel at speeds of 20 mph or higher, you should look for a high-impact helmet, such as a motorcycle helmet or one that meets the NTA-8776 certification, which was specifically designed for e-bikes.
Scan this QR code to learn more.

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