



A Parent's Guide to E-bikes and Scooters

What you need to know when buying a bike or scooter with an electric motor for your child

Thinking about buying an e-bike, motorized scooter or other electric vehicle for your child?

Here are some things you need to know to ensure your child is safe and complying with state and local laws. Remember, as a parent you have responsibility for your child's actions on such a machine.

There are three legal E-bikes classes:

Class 1:

- Pedal-assist up to 20 mph
- Motor assistance only while pedaling
- Permitted on roads, bike lanes, and multiuse trails
- No age requirements for use
- Helmets required for <16 and encouraged for all riders

Class 2:

- Throttle-assist up to 20 mph
- Motor can be activated by a throttle without pedaling
- Treated similarly to Class 1 under Georgia law
- No age requirements for use
- Helmets required for <16 and encouraged for all riders

Class 3:

- Pedal-assist up to 28 mph
- Not allowed on bicycle or shared use paths unless adjacent to a highway or roadway (or if allowed by local authority or state agency with jurisdiction)
- Rider must be at least age 15
- Helmets required for all riders

Georgia law requires all e-bikes be equipped with a permanently affixed label in a prominent location identifying Class (1, 2, or 3,) the top assisted speed capability, and maximum motor wattage (equal to or below 750 watts). GA Code §§ 40-6-300 — 40-6-303

There are now bikes on the market that allow the rider to switch between these three classes. If your child is below age 15, you should make sure they do not have a bike that can be modified to serve as a Class 3 e-bike.

Sometimes what are known as e-motos or e-motorcycles are confused with e-bikes. This includes bikes marketed as "Unclassified" e-bikes. **If a bike can exceed the speed and power limits imposed on e-bikes, it is an e-moto or e-motorcycle.** This includes bikes that enable riders to switch them to an e-bike class but also have an "Unclassified" setting. Some e-motos have pedals like a bicycle, but that alone does not make them an e-bike. Most e-motos have powerful engines (typically 750+ watts) that can reach speeds in excess of 35 mph. Some have lights and turn signals and are street legal with vehicle registration, insurance, and a valid Class M (for motorcycle) driver's license. Many are designed for off-road use only.

Under state and local laws, it is illegal to operate these off-road machines on roadways, sidewalks, and multi-use paths under any circumstances. You should not purchase one for

your child if it is intended to serve as a means of transportation on routes utilizing public paths and streets.

Scooters and Other Electric Play Vehicles – This class includes scooters, hoverboards, skateboards and other similar machines with electric motors. In Glynn County, this type of device is allowed on multi-use paths provided its motor is limited to a speed of 20 mph. If used on a roadway it needs to have a motor of 750 watts or less. It is important to make sure the rider wears a helmet and that only one rider per vehicle is allowed.

Glynn County recently adopted a new ordinance for use of multiuse paths in the County. Here is a synopsis of the “Rules of the Trail” included in the ordinance.

Rules For Multi-Use Path or Trail Under Glynn County Ordinance 2-13-55 and 56:

- Trail system speed limit: 15 MPH
- No motorized vehicles allowed except for e-bikes, electric play vehicles, or personal mobility devices. Golf carts, e-motos and other high speed motorized vehicles are prohibited.
- Wheeled traffic must yield to pedestrians.
- Keep to the right of the trail while going in either direction except to pass.
- Step off path when stopped to avoid congestion.
- Slow down and use caution when passing other users in either direction. Provide an audible warning (bell, horn, or voice) and announce yourself “On Your Left” when overtaking slower users.
- Utilize electronic crossing signals at intersections when available. Use extreme caution when approaching and crossing all other intersections and road crossings.
- By law, bicycle, e-bike and electric vehicle riders under the age of 16 must wear helmets. Helmets are recommended for all riders.
- Wheeled vehicles must have a white light in the front and red reflector or light in the rear during low-light conditions.
- Pets must be on a leash 6’ or shorter.

For additional information about e-bikes, scooters and electric play vehicles, follow us on our social media, find us online at bikewalkgoldenisles.org or reach out to us at info@bikewalkgoldenisles.org.

