

Safety Tips and Rules for E-Bikes

Electric bicycles, or e-bikes, are classified as bicycles under the Highway Traffic Act and as such, they can be operated on City roadways. As with the rules for bicycles, e-bikes are not allowed on sidewalks, and those operating an e-bike must be over the age of 16.

An e-bike is a bicycle that:

- Has a maximum weight of 120 kg (includes the weight of bike and battery)
- Has steering handlebars and is equipped with pedals
- Is designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground
- Is capable of being propelled by muscular power

Removing Pedals from an E-bike:

Removing the pedals from the e-bike negates the ability to propel the vehicle by muscular power and effectively changes the classification of the e-bike under the HTA to a “Limited Speed Motorcycle” (LSM) (MVSA s.). Operators of an LSM are required to carry an “M” class driver’s licence, register the vehicle with MTO and attach a licence plate, and must carry the permit for the vehicle and valid proof of insurance as you would have to do if driving a car or motorcycle.

Application of the Criminal Code of Canada:

Operating an e-bike with no pedals attached or not pedaling the e-bike changes the classification of the e-bike to a “Motor Vehicle” under the Criminal Code of Canada. In short, Impaired Driving, Dangerous Driving and other charges can be applicable.

Suspended Drivers:

A person who is a suspended driver under the HTA for a Criminal Code conviction cannot legally drive an e-bike.

E-Bike Rules:

- All operators and passengers must be at least 16 years of age.
- All operators and passengers must wear an approved bicycle or motorcycle helmet. There are no age exemptions.
- No driver's license, vehicle registration, vehicle liability insurance is needed to operate an e-bike.
- E-bikes are not allowed on sidewalks, 400 series highways any municipal roads where bicycles are prohibited (E.C. Row Expressway, Dougall Parkway between Roseland and Sixth Concession) or on multi-use trails within the city of Windsor.

Travelling in Groups:

- Ride in single file.
- Keep a minimum one metre distance between other e-bike riders in the group and keep several lengths apart when going downhill at high speeds.

Interacting with Vehicles:

- It is always important to remember that in any collision with a vehicle, the car or truck will fare better.
- Users need to operate their e-bikes with due care, and take efforts to ensure that motorists can see them and predict their behavior. The use of bright clothing and hand signals are both good ideas.

Traffic Signals:

- Signaling is a matter of law, courtesy, and self protection. Use these signals when stopping or turning:
 - **Left turn:** Left hand and arm extended horizontally beyond the side of the e-bike.
 - **Right turn:** Left hand and arm extended upward beyond the left side or the right hand.
 - **Stop or sudden decrease of speed:** Left hand and arm extended downward beyond the left side of the e-bike.

Making Left-Handed Turns:

- There are two ways to make a left turn:
 - **Like an automobile** - Look over your left shoulder for traffic behind you, signal, move into the left lane when safe, yield to oncoming traffic, and turn left. Complete the turn near the right curb.
 - **Like a pedestrian** - Dismount from your e-bike and cross following pedestrian rules.

Driving at Night:

- E-bikes should have both front and rear facing lights in addition to reflectors on the wheels.
- Riders should wear light-coloured clothing and reflective stickers should be affixed to bike helmets to make them more visible.

Other Safety Tips:

- Always wear a helmet.
- Obey all traffic signs and regulations.
- Ride your e-bike near the right-hand edge of the road.
- Never carry another person on your e-bike.
- Never wear headphones while riding as they impair your ability to hear traffic.
- Always use hand signals when turning or stopping.
- Competing with high speed, heavy traffic is dangerous. Look for safer, less travelled routes.
- Be careful when checking traffic and when looking over your shoulder.
- Give pedestrians the right-of-way.
- All electrical sources must be completely covered.