

# CALIFORNIA'S E-BIKE LAW



## CALIFORNIA'S E-BIKE LAW FOR THE ROAD

- » E-bikes are regulated like bicycles. The same rules of the road apply to both e-bikes and human-powered bicycles.
- » E-bikes are not subject to the registration, licensing, or insurance requirements that apply to motor vehicles.
- » California designates three classes of e-bikes:
  - Class 1: Bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 20 mph.
  - Class 2: Bicycle equipped with a throttle-actuated motor, that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 20 mph.
  - Class 3: Bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 28 mph.

VEHICLE TYPE	VEHICLE			USER			BIKEWAY ACCESS			
	PEDAL OPERATED	MAXIMUM MOTOR-ASSISTED SPEED (MPH)	MINIMUM AGE (YEARS)	DRIVER'S LICENSE	LICENSE PLATE	HELMET	CLASS I BIKE PATH	CLASS II BIKE LANE	CLASS III BIKE ROUTE	CLASS IV PROTECTED LANE
BICYCLE	YES	N/A	N/A	NO	NO	17 AND UNDER	YES	YES	YES	YES
CLASS 1 E-BIKE	YES	20	N/A	NO	NO	17 AND UNDER	YES	YES	YES	YES
CLASS 2 E-BIKE	NO	20	N/A	NO	NO	17 AND UNDER	YES	YES	YES	YES
CLASS 3 E-BIKE	YES	28	16	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
MOPEL	NO	N/A	16	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO

\* The following California laws are referenced: Cal. Veh. Code, § 312.5; § 21200 - 21212; § 21207.5; § 24016

- » Helmets are required for riders of Class 3 e-bikes. Persons under 16 years of age may not ride a Class 3 e-bike (unless as a passenger). There are certain access restrictions for Class 3 e-bike riders.
- » Local governments have the authority to restrict the use of e-bikes under motor power on bike paths. When in doubt, check with your town, city, or county for local rules and regulations.

## eMTB GUIDELINES

- » On federal, state, county and local trails, e-mountain bike (eMTB) access varies significantly.
- » Generally, any natural surface trail that is designated as open to both motorized and non-motorized uses is also open to eMTBs.
- » eMTBs may not be allowed on trails managed for non-motorized activities.
- » Do not ride your eMTB in areas where the local rules are unclear. Ride legally and only on authorized trails to show that mountain bikers are responsible trail users.
- » When in doubt, ask your local land manager about access to specific trails. Local land rules change frequently.

## CALIFORNIA'S E-BIKE LAW FOR TRAILS

- » LOCAL: Consult your local land management agency.
- » In California State Parks, Class 1 and Class 2 electric bicycles may be allowed where bicycles are allowed as long as they're not specifically called out as prohibited. They are currently allowed in Chino Hills and Wilder Ranch State Parks, as well as Folsom and Auburn State Recreation Areas. Contact California State Parks for more information.
- » FEDERAL: On federal lands, eMTBs are considered motorized vehicles and have access to motorized trails. Contact the US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Regional Office or the BLM California State Office for more information.

## GREAT eMTB RIDES IN CALIFORNIA

- » **Downieville Classic**  
Downieville | 14.5 miles
- » **Best of Wilder Ranch**  
Santa Cruz | 16.5 miles
- » **Cannell Trail**  
Kernville | 24.8 miles
- » **Cook and Green Trail**  
Klamath National Forest | 14.2 miles

## With an e-bike, bicyclists can ride more often, farther, and for more trips.

Electric bicycles are designed to be as safe as traditional bicycles, do not compromise consumer safety, and benefit bicyclists who may be discouraged from riding a traditional bicycle due to limited physical fitness, age, disability or convenience.

In many states, e-bikes are regulated under antiquated laws primarily aimed at combustion engine vehicles such as mopeds or scooters. PeopleForBikes and the Bicycle Product Suppliers Association are clarifying state laws governing the use of e-bikes in the U.S. Every state's law is different, but the objective is to ensure that low-speed e-bikes are regulated similarly to traditional, human-powered bicycles.



## Learn more at [PeopleForBikes.org/e-bikes](https://peopleforbikes.org/e-bikes)

- » Blogs and webinars
- » E-bike laws around the country
- » E-bike statistics and research
- » Buying guide
- » Retailer materials
- » eMTB management resources