BIKE, E-BIKE, AND RECREATION SAFETY

Fairfax County Police Department, Traffic Safety Section

Just because a major retailer offers an item for sale does not mean that it is "street-legal" or safe for the particular age of the rider. Adults and parents/guardians of youth riders must understand that helmets should always be worn (even if a toy is being used on private property). In the case of minors age 15 and under, a helmet shall be worn by law.

Know Before You Ride

Helmets are mandatory for bicycle operators and riders under 15. The helmet shall be worn while riding or being transported on a bicycle on any highway, sidewalk, or public bicycle path.

Fairfax County § 82-6-38.1

No person less than 14 years old shall drive any electric personal assistive mobility device, motorized skateboard or scooter, or class three electric power-assisted bicycle unless under the immediate supervision of a person who is at least 18 years old.

Virginia State § 46.2-908.1

Bicyclists and motorists basically have the same rights, responsibilities and duties. The laws governing traffic regulation apply equally to both.

Each transportation mode has specific definitions and rules.

Know Your Ride

Electric power-assisted bicycle: a vehicle that travels on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground and is equipped with (i) pedals that allow propulsion by human power, (ii) a seat for the use of the rider, and (iii) an electric motor with an input of no more than 750 watts.

Bicycle

Propelled solely by human power which a person may ride either on a regular attached seat having two or more wheels in tandem, including children's bicycles, except a toy vehicle intended for use by young children. A bicycle is a vehicle when operated on the highway.

Class 1 E-Bike

Electric power-assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of 20 miles per hour.

Class 2 E-Bike

Electric power-assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.

Class 3 E-Bike

Electric power-assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 28 miles per hour.

Moped

A vehicle that travels on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground that has (i) a seat that is no less than 24 inches in height, measured from the middle of the seat perpendicular to the ground and (ii) gasoline, electric, or hybrid motor that displaces less than 50 cubic centimeters.

Motorcycle

A motor vehicle designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground and is capable of traveling at speeds in excess of 35 miles per hour.

Motor-Driven Cycle

A motorcycle that has a gasoline engine that (i) displaces less than 150 cubic centimeters; (ii) has a seat less than 24 inches in height, measured from the middle of the seat perpendicular to the ground; and (iii) has no manufacturer-issued vehicle identification number.

Motorized Skateboard/Scooter

A vehicle, regardless of the number of its wheels in contact with the ground, that (i) has no seat, but is designed to be stood upon by the operator, (ii) has no manufacturer-issued vehicle identification number, and (iii) is powered by an electric motor having an input of no more than 1,000 watts or a gasoline engine that displaces less than 36 cubic centimeters.

Your Responsibility

From bicycles, e-scooters, dirtbikes and mini-bikes, to other ride-on toys, this equipment may not all be permitted on sidewalks, trails, or roads, and not all riders can legally operate them. You are responsible for ensuring that you and your children understand the vehicle, necessary safety equipment, and where they are permitted for use.

Key Bike Safety Guidelines

Always Wear a Helmet:

A properly fitted helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85 percent. It is also a law in Fairfax County that any person under the age of 15 must wear a protective helmet when riding a bicycle. This includes E-bikes. § 82-6-38.1

Follow the Rules of the Road:

- Ride on the right side of the street, with traffic.
- Use hand signals when turning or stopping.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Stop at stop signs and yield to pedestrians.
- If it's operated in a public area, it must follow all applicable traffic and pedestrian laws. These laws exist for a reason - to prevent injuries, protect children, and keep our roads and neighborhoods safe for everyone.

Check Equipment Before Every Ride:

- Test brakes.
- Inflate tires to the correct pressure.
- Ensure reflectors and lights are working, especially for early or late rides.

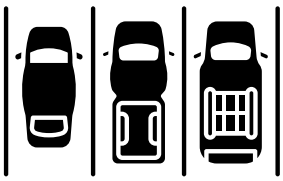
Virginia law requires all riders using sidewalks, trails, or crosswalks to:

- Yield to pedestrians.
- Give an audible signal before passing (bell, horn, or verbal cue).

Know Before You Ride or Purchase:

- Just because something is sold in a store or online does not mean it's safe or legal to use on public roads or trails.
- Whether you're a parent shopping for your child, a teen riding around town, or an adult using an E-Bike or scooter to commute, you are responsible for understanding the law and riding safely.
- Thoroughly research the device you intend to purchase.
- Know and obey state laws, and local regulations.
- Understand where and how your transportation can be used. Understand private vs. public property, sidewalk, and trail laws, and pay attention to signs that may regulate or prohibit use on trails and sidewalks.
- Supervise youth riders and set clear expectations.

Motor Vehicle Drivers:



- Be especially alert in school zones and neighborhoods.
- Watch for multi-modal transportation users crossing the street or biking along the road.
- Yield at crosswalks and obey school bus signals.
- Avoid distractions, including mobile devices. Virginia is a HANDS-FREE state.
- Always follow posted speed limits.

Ride Safe, Fairfax County

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/bike-walk/safety

Scan the QR code to learn more. .

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