

Ask an Expert – E#Bike/ E#Scooter Safety 101

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E-bikes and e-scooters are efficient devices that can provide a great way to explore neighborhoods, run errands, travel to school, or enjoy outdoor time with family and friends. But before you power up and go, it's important to understand how to ride safely and legally in Utah. Consider this information.

What is an e-bike?

In Utah, an electric-assisted bicycle (e-bike) is defined as a bike with:

- A motor of no more than 750 watts.
- Fully operable pedals.
- Assistance that cuts out once a certain speed is reached.

There are three classes:

- Class 1: Pedal assist only, up to 20 mph.
- Class 2: Throttle and pedal assist, up to 20 mph.
- Class 3: Pedal assist only, up to 28 mph.

No driver's license, registration, or insurance is required to ride an e-bike. However:

- Children under 8 may not operate an e-bike.
- Riders under 14 must be supervised by a parent or guardian.
- Only riders 16 and older may operate Class 3 e-bikes.

According to [Utah legislation](#), e#bikes are required to follow the same rules as bicycles on public paths and roads.

What is an e-scooter?

An electric scooter or e-scooter is a lightweight, two-wheeled device powered by a rechargeable electric motor. Riders stand on a flat deck and steer using handlebars. Personal e#scooters, which are widely available at retailers such as Costco and online, typically reach speeds of up to 15 mph and are popular with youth. While they're fun and convenient, their speed and mobility mean helmets and supervision are essential. E-scooters also don't require a license or insurance, but they have their own rules:

- Riders under 8 may not use them on public property.
- Children ages 8–15 must be supervised by an adult.
- Devices are generally limited to speeds of 15 mph and must be operated safely and responsibly.

Gear and basic rules for riding

No matter your age or device, safety should be your top priority.

- Wear a helmet and colorful clothing. This protects your head and makes you more visible.
- Inspect your ride before you go. Check brakes, tires, and handlebars.
- Follow traffic laws like a cyclist. Obey stop signs and signals, ride with traffic, and yield to pedestrians.
- Use appropriate paths. E-bikes and e-scooters are generally allowed on bike lanes, multi-use paths, and roadways where bicycles are permitted.

In Salt Lake City, shared mobility devices (including e#scooters and e#bikes) must be parked responsibly between the sidewalk and curb so they don't block access for pedestrians, particularly those with mobility challenges. Riding on downtown sidewalks is discouraged or prohibited in many areas.

Who should ride, and who should wait?

Electric mobility can be great for adults and older teens, but younger children may not have the judgment or coordination for fast-moving devices on shared paths or roads. Utah's laws reflect this with age limits and supervision requirements for both e#bikes and e#scooters. If you're unsure whether an e#bike or scooter is the right fit for you or your child, consider:

- Intended use (commuting vs. recreation).

- Typical route conditions.
- Comfort with traffic and shared path dynamics.

Be on the lookout

As warmer weather approaches, expect to see more kids and teens riding e#bikes and e#scooters around neighborhoods, parks, and city streets. This can create unexpected situations for drivers and pedestrians. Young riders may not understand traffic rules or anticipate hazards, so it's up to all of us to stay alert.

- Slow down in neighborhoods and near schools. Kids may dart into the street without warning.
- Watch intersections closely. Young riders might enter crosswalks or turn without signaling.
- Give extra space. Treat e#bikes and e-scooters like bicycles. Pass with care and patience.
- Stay alert for sudden movements. Children can be unpredictable, especially when excited about a new ride.
- Leave it at home for fairs and crowded events. Riding through festivals or busy gatherings can be dangerous for pedestrians, and some events may even restrict e-bikes and e-scooters entirely. Check before heading out.

Ride smart, ride respectfully

E#bikes and e-scooters can replace short car trips, provide healthy time outdoors, and open up new ways to explore your community. Just remember to ride with awareness, follow local laws, wear proper gear, and respect others by sharing the path. A little extra caution can prevent serious accidents and keep our communities safe.

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