Who Can Ride What Where

Understanding New York's E-Bike Laws

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Dutchess County Transportation Council

October 29, 2026

New York Bicycling Coalition (NYBC)



NYBC works for cyclists and pedestrians:

- **Advocate** for regulations, funding, and infrastructure to make our streets safer and cycling better, primarily at the state level, but also federal and local initiatives.
- **Educate** bicyclists, walkers, and drivers about how we can be safer together, and help law enforcement officers learn the bike law.
- **Build** a strong biking and pedestrian community across New York through events and gatherings -





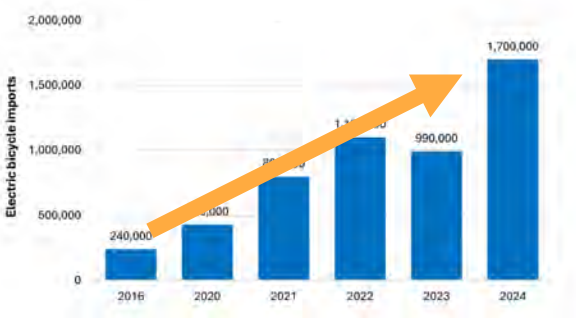
NYS Safe Streets Coalition

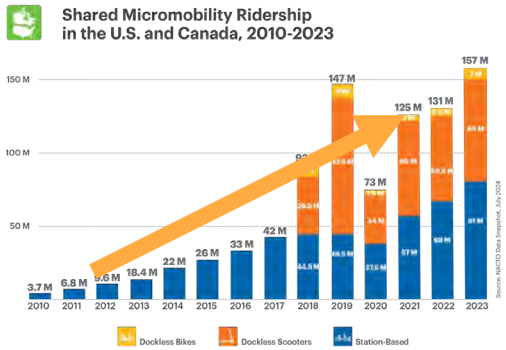
More than 150 organizations and dignitaries from across New York.

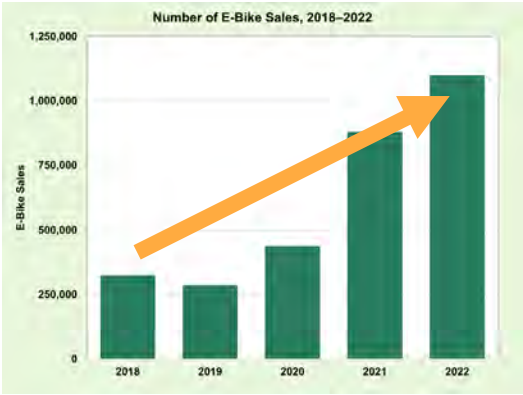
https://www.nyssafestreets.org

Everyone is always talking about e-bikes!

In Case You Missed It … E-mobility is Exploding







Imports

December 2025 Minetta Report

https://transweb.sjsu.edu/sites/default/files/2423-Agrawal-Electric-Bicycle-Safety-Data-Policy.pdf

Bike Share

December 2023 NACTO

https://nacto.org/publication/shared-micromobility-report-2023

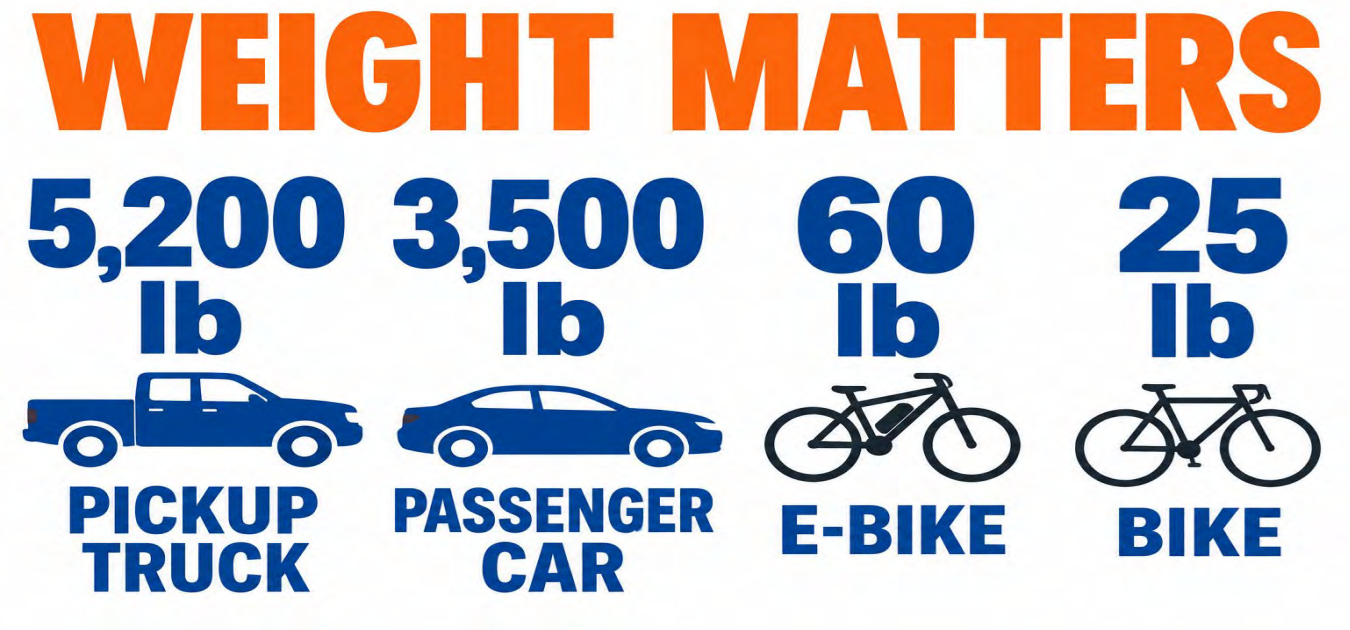
Sales

December 2023 US DOE

https://www.energy.gov/cmei/vehicles/articles/fotw-1321-december-18-2023-e-bike-sales-united-states-exceeded-one-million

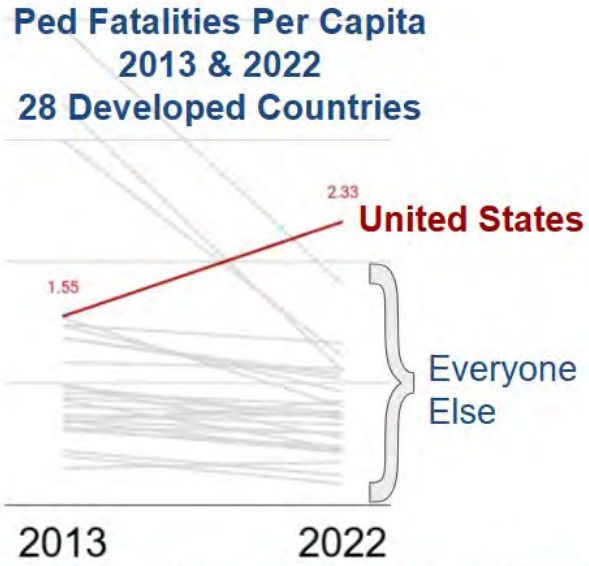
Safety is everyone’s goal! Micromobility is new. Physics isn't.

- Micromobility is new, visible, and growing.
- The overwhelming number of traffic deaths are caused by motor vehicles.



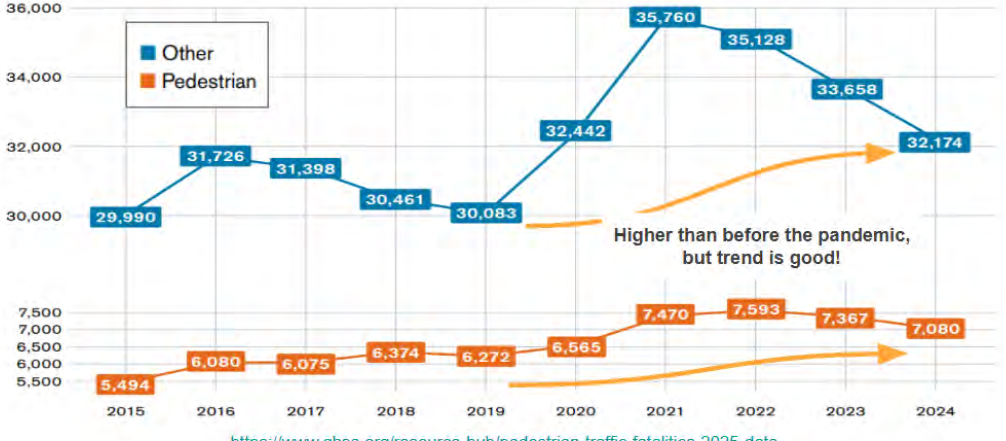
US is a Traffic Safety Outlier - regardless of e-bikes

By far the most dangerous developed country - for everyone and for pedestrians.



https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/74/wr/mm7408a2.htm

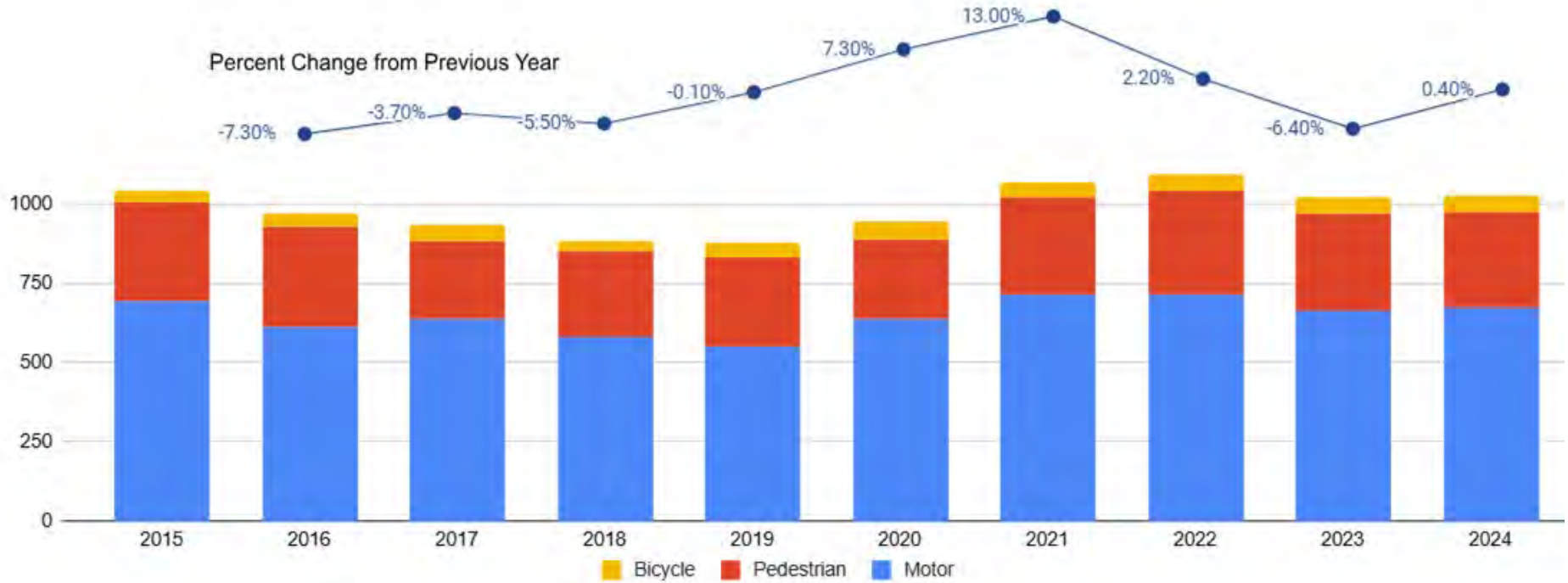
Post covid trends are promising, although still not back to baseline



https://www.ghsa.org/resource-hub/pedestrian-traffic-fatalities-2025-data

Note: 2025 Data is preliminary and NYS data is likely to change.

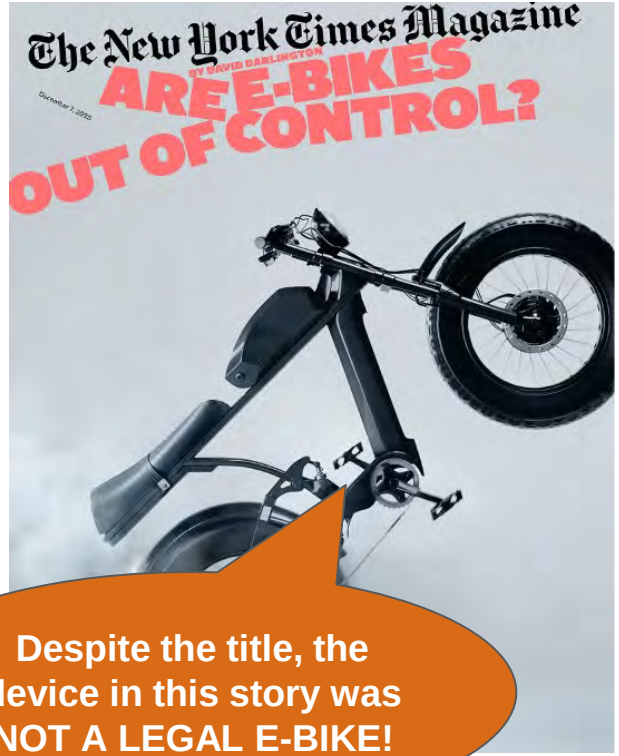
New York - 2024 Fatal Crashes - wrong direction



https://www.itsmr.org/traffic-safety-statistical-repository/ (2023 - 2024 - 2025 not yet final)

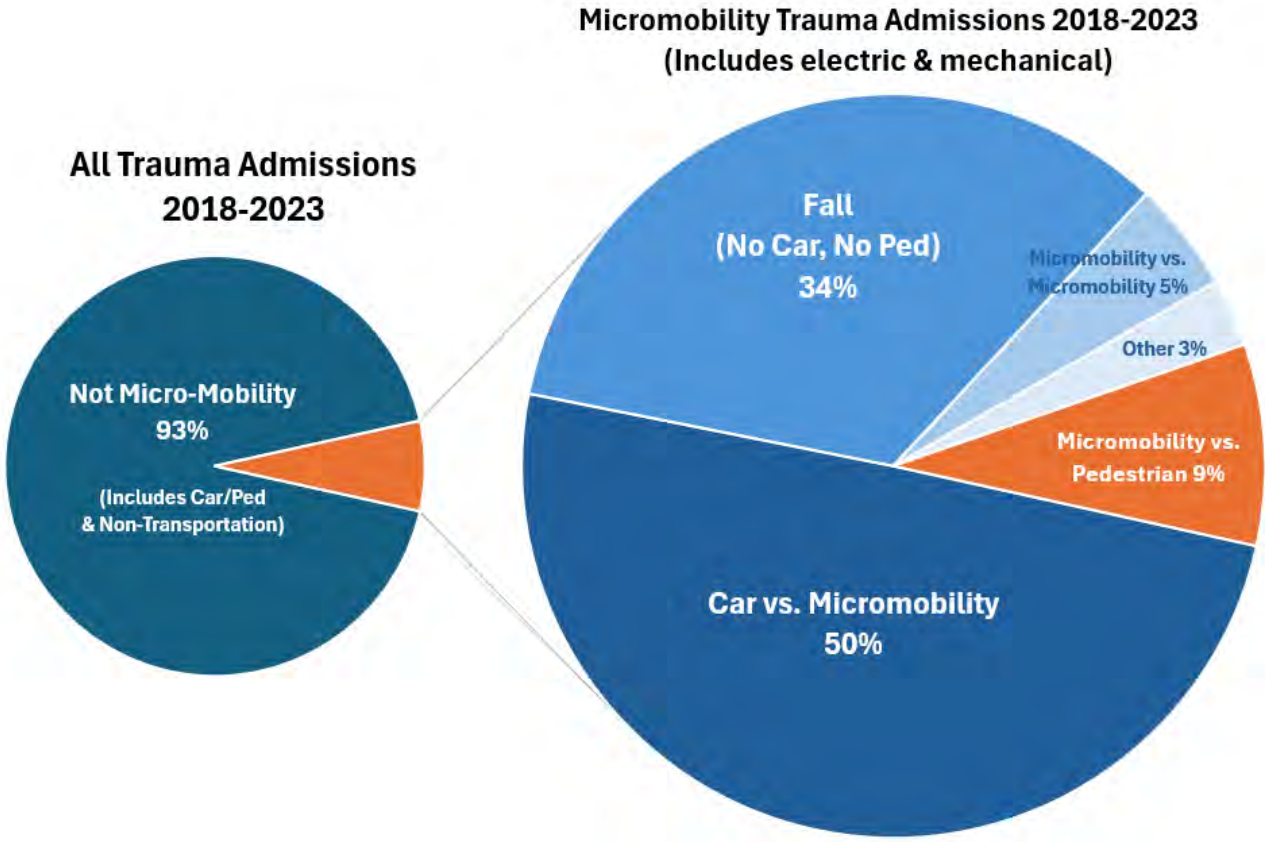
Good data is hard to find

- Almost all data conflates legal e-bikes and faster, heavier e-motos.
- NYC has better data.
- NYS data is mostly not available - New police tracking form is coming, but not yet fully implemented.



Despite the title, the device in this story was NOT A LEGAL E-BIKE!

The Fast and the Fragile, Weiss et al 2026



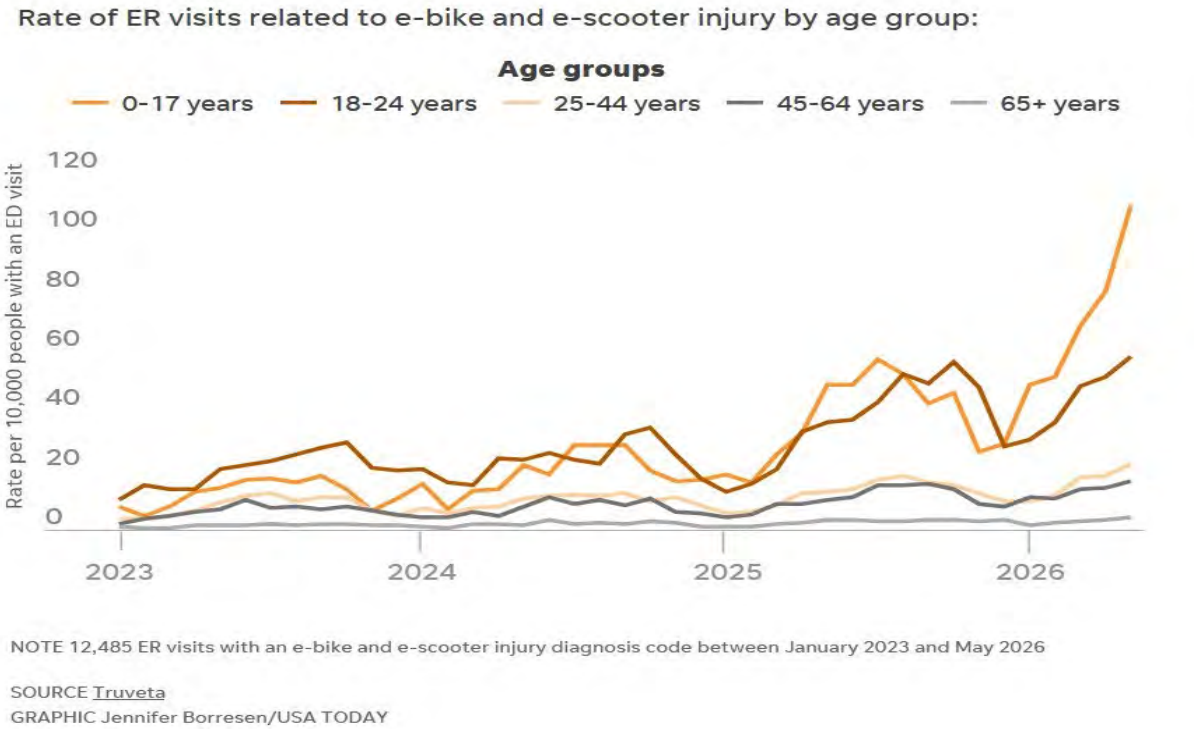
Conflates legal e-bikes and illegal devices.

90% of injuries are to device riders.

Pedestrian impact real, but much less significant.

- https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC13052393/pdf/neu-98-0974.pdf

National Increase in ER visits - USA Today



- Conflates legal e-bikes and illegal devices.
- Huge spike for children under 17 this year.
- Lack of Helmet use contributes

Current NYS Law:
Who Can (legally) Ride What Where

Lots more details at
https://nybc.net/nys-bike-law/e-bike

WHO

Who can ride?

- **16 or older** to ride an e-bike or e-scooter in NYS.
- No minimum for regular bikes.
- NYS is an outlier. Most states have **no minimum age** for low speed e-bikes (up to 20 mph).
- No passengers at all on e-scooters.
- Passengers on e-bikes same as regular bikes - under age 1 not allowed, age 1-5 special seat required.



Photo borrowed from
https://www.goride.co.nz/

Helmets - NYS Law

- Helmets are required on regular bikes for children up to age 14 (good fit, securely fastened).
- **No additional helmet law for legal Class 1 & 2 e-bikes.**
- Helmets required for Class 3 e-bikes.
- Helmets required **for 16 & 17 year olds on e-scooters**.
- Local communities often have additional helmet laws. NYC requires helmets for all commercial riders regardless of class. Some municipalities require helmets for all e-bike riders, and sometimes all bike riders.



NYBC
Safety Shorts

Helmets Reduce Serious Head Injury by 60%

Proper Fit Will Keep You Safe.

- Sit level and snug on your head
- Two fingers from eyebrow to helmet
- Strap should form "Y" below the ears
- No more than 2 fingers between chin & strap
- Children under 14 MUST wear one



WHAT
AKA E-bikes vs. E-motos

What’s a Legal E-bike? “Bicycle with Electric Assist”



E-bike →

← NOT



What’s a Legal E-bike? “Bicycle with Electric Assist”



← NOT

E-bike →



What's a legal E-Bike in New York?

Bicycle with Electric Assist

- Bicycle (2 or 3 wheels)
- Operable pedals
- Motor under 750W
- Motor cuts out at 20 mph
  (25 mph NYC only - Class 3*)
- May be "pedal assist" or throttle
  (Class 1 = no throttle,
  Class 2 = throttle)



E-Scooter

- Handlebars
- Sit or stand
- Motor cuts out at 20 mph
- Under 100 pounds





Do any of these sentences make sense?

“Someone was riding 40 mph up the hill on an e-bike!”

Nope, 20 mph max motor assist, 25 mph in NYC.

“There was a gas powered e-bike riding on the sidewalk

Nope, gas power => Not an e-bike!

“That e-bike doesn’t even have pedals!”

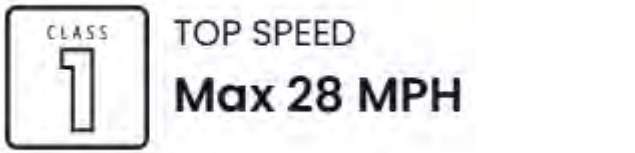
Nope, e-bikes must have operable pedals. They may *also* have a throttle, but no pedals → not an e-bike!

It’s surprisingly difficult to know what you are buying!

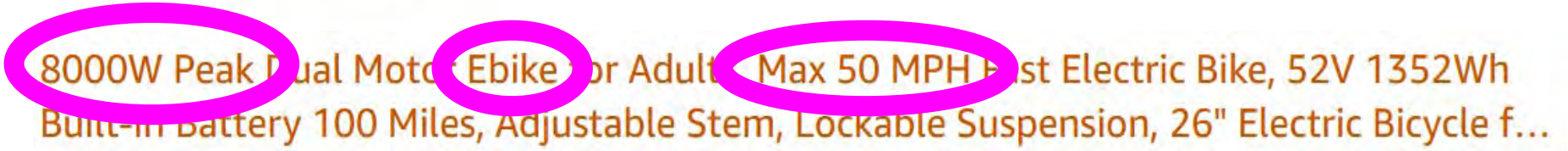
These are pulled from major online retailers in July 2026. All listed as “e-bikes”.











What is that thing?

In NY if it's not human powered, it is a **motor vehicle** unless it's specifically listed as an exception. Complete list of exceptions:

(a) Disability devices
    (a-1) Segways (outside NYC only)
(b) Things that run on rails or tracks
(c) Snowmobiles
(d) Bicycle with electric assist
(e) e-scooters
(f) ATVs

If it's an exception then by law it is **NOT a motor vehicle**.

No word in NYS Law for things that look like e-bikes but don't meet the qualifications as a legal e-bike/bicycle with electric assist.

https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/VAT/125

What is that thing?















This chart is missing something major!

E-Bike Class 1	E-Bike Class 2	E-Bike Class 3	E-Scooter	Moped Class C	Moped Class B	Moped Class A
Pedal assist	*Throttle with pedals*	*Pedal assist o Throttle with pedals*	*Under 100lbs*	*Limited use motorcycle*	*Limited use motorcycle*	*Limited use motorcycle*
						
20 MPH	20 MPH	25 MPH	20 MPH	20 MPH	30 MPH	40 MPH

Credit: NYC Department of Transportation

Not everything is or can be legal in NYS

E-Bike Class 1	E-Bike Class 2	E-Bike Class 3	E-Scooter	WHAT IS THAT THING?	Moped Class C	Moped Class B	Moped Class A
Pedal assist	*Throttle with pedals*	*Pedal assist or Throttle with pedals*	*Under 100lbs*	"E-moto"? "Non-Compliant Motor Vehicle"? "Bike shaped device"? "Unregistrable motor vehicle"?	*Limited use motorcycle*	*Limited use motorcycle*	*Limited use motorcycle*
							
20 MPH	20 MPH	25 MPH	20 MPH	**No term in NYS Law!**	20 MPH	30 MPH	40 MPH

Not Motor Vehicles	Motor Vehicles	
No Registration/License/Insurance	Cannot Register NOT street legal	Registration/License etc.

Other stuff:

- **ATVs/Snowmobiles**: Treated similarly but not identically in NYS. Not Motor Vehicles but specific requirements re: registration, equipment, etc. and are generally not allowed on roads.
- **Self Balancing Devices:** Segways, Hoverboards - Not Motor Vehicles, similar to e-bikes/e-scooters
- **Electric Wheelchairs -** Not Motor Vehicles, users are pedestrians by law.

Sneak Preview
Social Media Campaign

HOW TO IDENTIFY AN

E-BIKE



VERSUS

E-MOTO



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NOTE

"E-moto" is not defined in NYS Law. It is a popular term that is used to describe things that look like legal E-bikes but are not street-legal.

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E-BIKES ARE STREET LEGAL

E-MOTOS ARE NOT



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VISUAL COMPARISON



E-bikes must have **pedals.**



If it has **foot pegs**, it is not an E-bike.



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CHECK FOR LABELS & WATTS

Legal E-bikes have up to **750W.**

CLASS **2** **750W 20MPH**

If wattage is more than 750W, it is **not** a legal E-bike.



E-bikes in New York **must have a manufacturer's sticker** stating bike wattage, max speed, and class. If you don't have a sticker, you may get ticketed!

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SPEED

E-BIKES

Max assisted speed of 20mph.*

**Class 3 E-bikes with max assist up to 25mph are allowed in NYC only, but the speed limit for all e-bikes in NYC is 15mph.*



E-MOTOS

Max assisted speed greater than 20mph.



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WHERE

It’s a patchwork!

- NYS law permits Cities, Villages and Towns to regulate “time, place and manner” of e-bikes.
- Counties and municipalities also have home rule authority.
- Land owners and park managers can create their own rules.
- Even those trying to follow the law can be caught unaware when crossing boundaries.
- Illinois had a similar system - new law eliminates local control on streets, retaining local control for parks and public lands.



No e-bikes on roads where Speed Limit Over 30 mph

- Unless allowed by local law or ordinance.
- Regular bicycles *are allowed* on these roads. Regular bikes are excluded only from limited-access highways.
- Most roads outside city/village/town centers are posted at 35+ so this seriously limits the use of e-mobility for transportation.
- Some communities have overridden this law. *"... class one and class two bicycles … are hereby allowed to be operated anywhere bicycles without electric assist are legally allowed … including roads with speed limits over 30 miles per hour."*
  Town of Queensbury https://ecode360.com/40143010

No riding e-bikes on sidewalks



- Unless allowed by local law or ordinance.
- Bikes/e-bikes can park on sidewalks but can't interfere with "free passage of pedestrians".
- Regular bikes are also generally not allowed on sidewalks. Most communities limit sidewalk riding to children. Rochester allows e-bikes and regular bikes on sidewalks outside the city center. https://ecode360.com/8674475#8674480

No e-bikes/e-scooters on public lands (parks and trails)

- Unless allowed by local law or ordinance.
- Technically includes for example municipal parking lots.
- Trail managers often allow Class 1 e-bikes (pedal assist, 20 mph max assist), occasionally Class 2 (throttle, 20 mph). Rarely Class 3 (25 mph, NYC only).
- Economic Impact:
  - Parks & Trails NY 2026: Empire State Trail alone supports 9,680 jobs, and yields $206 million in local tax revenue.
  - 10% of riders and growing on the PTNY supported ride using e-bikes

What’s Next in NYS Law?

Discussions happening in every single state

- Registration?
- License plate/sticker?
- Driver's License?
- Liability insurance?
- Local control?
- Helmet requirements?
- Age limits?
- Truth in Advertising/ Does “e-bike” always mean “legal e-bike”?
- Consumer Protection?
- Class Definitions?

Could we be like New Jersey?



https://www.nj.gov/mvc/vehicletopics/ebike.htm

NJ has the most restrictive e-bike law in the country, signed Jan 2026/Implemented July 2026

Requires

- **Registration** for all e-bikes - sticker not license plate.
- **Drivers license** for all e-bikes - special license available at age 15.
- **Liability insurance** for Class 2 and Up.

Roll back bill introduced this session that would eliminate registration, drivers license, and insurance for devices with max assist up to 20 mph.

State of Play in New York

- This session (Jan 2025- Dec 2026) there are about 100 e-bike bills.
  19 are related to license, registration or insurance.
- New session starts in January. Bills must be reintroduced each session.
- Assembly Transportation Committee e-bike hearing in January 2026 suggested there was interest in a NJ-style law
- But …. Assembly Transportation Chair Magnarelli lost his primary and is not returning in January

Bill to Watch: S10700 Sen. Gonzales / Assembly Member Moreno

- Defines “E-Moto”: faster than 20 mph, excluding legal e-bikes, legal e-scooters, and things already required to be registered by the DMV.
- Disallows sales of e-motos in both brick & mortar and online stores. Significant fines - ***“If it’s not legal to ride, it’s not legal to sell”***
- Prohibits deceptive/misleading advertising: “e-bikes” and “e-scooters” must meet NYS street legal definition.
- Requires posted warning that E-Motos and electric off-highway motorcycles are not street legal and not legal to sell to purchasers in New York State.
- https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2025/S10700

What to do?

Define the Problem

What is the experience in your community?

- Children and Youth?
- Recklessness?
- Sidewalks and Pedestrian Conflicts?
- Understanding of the law?

Solutions: Education | High Visibility Enforcement | Local Legislation

- Expect things to take time
- Expect things to change legislatively and on the ground
- No single answer - multifaceted approach

Education - Social Media, Events & Materials

- Parents & Families (Trailheads, Bike to School Days, Learn to Ride)
- Talk to your School District
  Education Law §806
  “which shall include bicycle safety,”
- PTAs, Bike Clubs, Bike Advocacy Organizations, Libraries, etc.
- Local Law Enforcement - share materials when making stops
- Social Media - NYBC content, can potentially help customize for your community



NYBC can provide free materials in English & Spanish
https://nybc.net/materialsrequest

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Carrot - E-bike Education Requirement for Access

- Cornell registration approach
- E-Bike quiz available at https://nybc.net/bikequiz
- Make it a requirement for registration or other campus access for students
- NYBC can create custom quiz
  - Certificate with your logo/branding
  - Custom questions for your community's unique laws.

When it is permissible for this Class 1 e-bike to be operated on a sidewalk in NY State?



- ○ Unless prohibited by local law, riding on a sidewalk is always allowed.
- ○ Unless permitted by local law, sidewalk riding is not permitted for bicycles with electric assist.
- ○ Unless prohibited by local law class 1 and 2 bicycles with electric assist are always allowed to ride on sidewalks, but class 3 are not.
- ○ Sidewalk riding is permitted if the bicycle lane is unusable.

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Law Enforcement & Traffic Safety Partner Classes

- Types of Active Transportation Devices
- Traffic laws re: traditional and new devices
- State & Local trends for active transportation
- Police Reports for crashes
- Citations of cyclists and drivers
- Activities: Bike Rodeos, Bike/Walk to School, Crosswalk Compliance



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High Visibility Enforcement Efforts

- **High visibility** - Use media attention to educate and dissuade future behavior
- **Measure** - Schenectady had many fewer complaints. Anecdotal so far, complaint code in place now for future quantitative data collection
- **It takes a plan!**
  - Joint effort with NYS Troopers, Sheriff, PD.
  - Agreed procedures: avoid chases to reduce risk.
  - Drones and/or helicopters to find stopped locations.





E-bike Local Legislation & Rules

- Recognize the value of e-mobility as affordable transportation.
- Align rules for low-speed, legal Class 1 & Class 2 e-bikes with bicycles
  - Streets with speed limits over 30 mph
  - Multi-Use trails and park roads as appropriate
  - Municipal parking lots
  - Town of Queensbury - good model for alignment
- Focus on behavior - Reckless & DUI
- Confirm needs with local Law Enforcement -
  - Legislative support needed for seizures? (reckless, dui, minors, illegal devices)
  - Do they have appropriate storage facilities?
  - Impoundment and storage fees can be a significant disincentive for reclaiming.
  - Albany County - model for seizure of legal devices, does not address illegal devices.

Other Local Legislative Initiatives - non E-bike

- **25 mph - Welcome Poughkeepsie!**
  - Joins Village of Millbrook & Tivoli
  - Beacon & Red Hook some discussion
  - Cities, Villages and some Towns eligible
- **3’ Passing - Welcome Dutchess!**
  - 7/62 Counties so far: Monroe, Suffolk, Albany, Ulster, Cortland, Chautauqua & Dutchess!
  - 41 States + DC
    All except: AK, ID, IA, MO, MT, NC, NY, SC, TX
  - NYS Senate passed 3 sessions (6 years)
  - Maybe this is the year for NYS Assembly?
    Assembly Bill & Sponsor list



NY Bike Summit

- NY Bike Summit - May 17 & 18, 2027
- Two Days | 3 Keynotes | 20+ Panel Discussions and Presentations
- For everyday cyclists, cycling advocates, industry experts, and state and local leaders
- Want to present?
  Abstract solicitation opens soon
- Stay up to date: http://nybc.net/subscribe



Let’s Talk!

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www.nybc.net
https://www.facebook.com/nybicyclingcoalition
https://www.instagram.com/nybicyclingcoalition