

Pol-Ed®

Keeping Children Safe

E-Rides Information for Parents and Carers

Understanding the different types of e-rides

What are e-rides?

E-rides are electric-powered vehicles designed to help people travel more easily. They include:

- Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPCs), commonly known as e-bikes.
- Throttle-operated or "twist and go" electric bikes.
- E-scooters

E-rides can offer many benefits, including increased independence, convenient travel and reduced environmental impact. However, it is important that both children and adults understand how to use them safely and legally.



Electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPCs)

EAPCs operate similarly to a traditional bicycle. Generally, the rider must pedal for the motor to provide assistance.



These bikes:

- Can be used on roads and cycle paths.
- The motor must stop providing assistance at 15.5 mph (25 km/h).
- Must have a 'continuous rated power' output of no more than 250 watts.
- Can be ridden legally by people aged 14 and over.

If your electric bike does not meet the EAPC rules, then it's classed as a motorcycle or moped.

An e-bike stops being legally classed as an EAPC if:

- Its motor has a continuous rated power higher than 250 watts.
- The motor continues to provide assistance when the bike is travelling faster than 15.5 mph (25 km/h).
- It does not have pedals capable of propelling the bike.
- It has been modified or derestricted so the motor can power it beyond the legal limits.

Government guidance states that bikes with an "off-road mode" that allows the motor to propel them above 15.5 mph are considered motor vehicles.



Does that mean the bike itself is completely illegal?

Not necessarily. A bike that doesn't meet the EAPC requirements is generally treated as a motorcycle or moped rather than a bicycle. To use it legally on a public road, it would need to meet the relevant motor-vehicle requirements, including registration, tax and insurance, and the rider would need the appropriate driving licence and an approved motorcycle helmet.

If someone rides such a bike on the road without meeting those requirements, they could be committing offences, and an uninsured bike may be seized by the police.

For example, many electric balance bikes, including models made by Revvi, Amped, STACYC, RFN and EBOX, do not meet the requirements to be an EAPC. Unless they meet the relevant requirements for use as a motor vehicle, they should only be used on private land with the landowner's permission.

E-scooters

Privately owned e-scooters are subject to strict legal restrictions including that they:

- Cannot legally be ridden in public places, including roads, pavements, parks and cycle lanes.
- Can only be ridden on private land with the permission of the landowner.

Some areas operate authorised rental e-scooter schemes, which follow separate legal requirements and may include minimum age and licensing conditions.

Understanding the risks:

Many people assume that because a vehicle can be purchased online or in a shop, it can automatically be used in public places. This is not always the case.

Using an e-ride illegally can result in:

- Increased risk of injury.
- Danger to pedestrians and other road users.
- Police involvement.
- The vehicle being seized by the police.

Parents and carers are encouraged to check the legal requirements of any e-ride before purchasing it for a child or allowing it to be used.



Staying safe

Whether using an e-bike, e-scooter or another e-ride, safety should always come first.

Wear protective equipment

- Always wear a properly fitted helmet.
- Consider additional protective equipment such as gloves, knee pads and elbow pads.
- Ensure clothing does not interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.
- Wear reflective clothing or accessories to improve visibility.

Many serious injuries occur when riders are not wearing appropriate safety equipment.

Battery safety

Lithium-ion batteries power many e-rides. If damaged or incorrectly charged, these batteries can pose a serious fire risk.

To reduce the risk:

- Use only the charger supplied or recommended by the manufacturer.
- Charge batteries in a safe location away from escape routes.
- Avoid charging batteries overnight or when the property is unattended.
- Inspect batteries regularly for damage, swelling or overheating.
- Stop using the battery immediately if you notice unusual smells, smoke or excessive heat.

If an e-ride battery begins to smoke or catches fire:

- Move to a safe distance immediately.
- Warn others nearby.
- Call 999.
- Do not attempt to tackle a significant battery fire yourself.

Parents and carers play an important role in helping children make safe and responsible choices. Before buying or allowing the use of an e-ride, check the manufacturer's guidance and ensure you understand the legal requirements for where and how the vehicle can be used. Safe, legal and responsible use helps everyone enjoy the benefits of e-rides while reducing the risk of injury and harm.

Understanding the rules

Vehicle Type	Legal for Under 16s?	Where Can It Be Used?	Key Things Parents Should Know
Pedal Bike	Yes	Roads, cycle lanes and private land	Must follow normal road rules. Helmet strongly recommended.
EAPC / Legal E-Bike (Electric Assisted Pedal Cycle)	Yes (minimum age 14)	Roads, cycle lanes and private land	Must have working pedals, motor no more than 250W, and assistance must cut out at 15.5 mph (25 km/h). No licence, tax or insurance required.
Electric Balance Bikes such as Revvi, Amped, STACYC, RFN and EBOX.	Yes, but only on private land	Private land with permission	These are designed for off-road/private use and are not road legal. They should not be ridden on roads, pavements, parks or public paths.
Modified E-Bikes ('Surron-style', derestricted or throttle-only bikes)	No	Not legal on roads or public places	Often classed as motorcycles. They require registration, insurance, a licence and protective equipment. Children cannot legally ride them on public roads.
Privately Owned Electric Scooters	No	Private land with permission only	It is illegal to ride a privately owned e-scooter on roads, pavements, cycle lanes or other public spaces.
Rental E-Scooters (trial areas only)	Usually no	Designated trial areas only	Riders normally need to be at least 16 and hold the required driving entitlement. Not available to most children.

Further Information

For more information on e-rides, please find advise and the law on the gov.uk website.

Riding an electric bike: the rules - GOV.UK

EAPC standards and legal requirements - GOV.UK

Riding an electric scooter: the rules - GOV.UK