



Town of Vienna, Virginia Police Department Media Information Release

E-Bikes: Know the Class, Know the Law



Knowing the difference between e-bike classes helps keep riders informed and supports safer use throughout the community. Virginia recognizes Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 electric power-assisted bicycles. These classes are treated as bicycles under Virginia law and are subject to Virginia traffic laws while being operated on a highway.

Class 1 e-bikes are pedal-assist only. The motor may have a maximum power of 750 watts, provides assistance only while the rider is pedaling, and does not use a throttle. The maximum assisted speed is 20 mph, and motor assistance stops at 20 mph. Class 1 e-bikes are street legal and are allowed on the W&OD Trail. In the Town of Vienna, riders under 14 years old are required to wear a helmet.

Class 2 e-bikes may be operated by throttle and/or pedal-assist. The motor may have a maximum power of 750 watts, the maximum assisted speed is 20 mph, and motor assistance stops at 20 mph. Class 2 e-bikes are street legal and are allowed on the W&OD Trail. In the Town of Vienna, riders under 14 years old are required to wear a helmet.

Class 3 e-bikes may be operated by throttle and/or pedal-assist, as reflected in the Department's campaign materials. The motor may have a maximum power of 750 watts, the maximum assisted speed is 28 mph, and motor assistance stops at 28 mph. Class 3 e-bikes are street legal, but they are not allowed on the W&OD Trail. Helmets are required for all Class 3 riders and passengers under Virginia law.

An off-road electric vehicle is not automatically an e-bike. These vehicles often exceed 750 watts, may exceed Class 1, Class 2, or Class 3 limits, are often designed primarily for off-road use, and may function more like a motorcycle. Off-road vehicles are not permitted on the W&OD Trail and are not street legal as e-bikes. The campaign materials also state that these vehicles are not permitted on a Virginia highway when they do not meet the legal requirements for roadway operation.

Relevant Virginia law includes Va. Code § 46.2-904.1, which addresses electric power-assisted bicycles, and Va. Code § 46.2-906.1, which addresses local authority to require helmets for riders of bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, and electric power-assisted bicycles. Va. Code § 46.2-908.1 addresses electric mobility devices and related vehicles, while Va. Code § 46.2-1015 addresses required lights and related equipment for bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, personal delivery devices, electric power-assisted bicycles, mopeds, and motorized skateboards or scooters.

Additional provisions identified in the Department's materials include Va. Code § 46.2-908, concerning registration of bicycle and related device serial numbers, and Va. Code § 46.2-904.1(D), concerning tampering with or modifying an electric power-assisted bicycle. Town of Vienna Code Chapter 21 also contains local provisions related to bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, toy vehicles, and electric power-assisted bicycles. Article 2 addresses the operation of bicycles, and Article 3 addresses bicycle equipment and maintenance.

Before riding, know the class of the e-bike, understand where it may legally be operated, follow applicable traffic laws, and make sure the rider meets all helmet requirements. Riders and parents should also be aware that modifying an e-bike may change how the vehicle is classified and where it may legally be operated.

To learn more about the Town Ordinance referenced in this post, please visit the link below. The link will direct you to the Town of Vienna website, where you can find more details about the safe operation of bicycles.

https://library.municode.com/.../codes/code_of_ordinances...

**For Further Information please contact
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E-BIKES: KNOW THE CLASS KNOW THE LAW



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OUR COMMUNITY
OUR HOME
OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Knowing the difference
helps keep our community
safe and riders informed.



VIENNA PD E-BIKE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN
PART 2: UNDERSTANDING E-BIKE CLASSES

E-BIKE CLASSES: KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

Understanding Virginia's E-Bike Classifications & Helmet Requirements

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CLASS 1 PEDAL-ASSIST ONLY



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Motor Power: Maximum 750W
- Motor assists only while pedaling
- No throttle
- Maximum assisted speed: 20 MPH
- Motor stops assisting at 20 MPH

W&OD TRAIL ACCESS

- Allowed on the W&OD Trail

HELMET REQUIREMENTS

- ⚠️ Helmet required for riders under 14 years old (Town of Vienna Local Ordinance)

NOTES

- Treated as a bicycle under Virginia law
- Subject to Virginia traffic laws while on a highway.

STREET LEGAL

CLASS 2 THROTTLE AND OR PEDAL-ASSIST



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Motor Power: Maximum 750W
- May be operated by throttle and/or pedal-assist
- Maximum assisted speed: 20 MPH
- Motor stops assisting at 20 MPH

W&OD TRAIL ACCESS

- Allowed on the W&OD Trail

HELMET REQUIREMENTS

- ⚠️ Helmet required for riders under 14 years old (Town of Vienna Local Ordinance)

NOTES

- Treated as a bicycle under Virginia law
- Subject to Virginia traffic laws while on a highway.

STREET LEGAL

CLASS 3 THROTTLE AND OR PEDAL-ASSIST



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Motor Power: Maximum 750W
- May be operated by throttle and/or pedal-assist
- Maximum assisted speed: 28 MPH
- Motor stops assisting at 28 MPH

W&OD TRAIL ACCESS

- ⊖ Not allowed on the W&OD Trail

HELMET REQUIREMENTS

- Helmet required for all riders and passengers (Virginia State Code)

NOTES

- Treated as a bicycle under Virginia law
- Subject to Virginia traffic laws while on a highway.

STREET LEGAL

NOT AN E-BIKE OFF-ROAD VEHICLE



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Often exceeds 750 watts
- May exceed Class 1, 2, or 3 limits
- Often designed primarily for off-road use
- May function more like a motorcycle

W&OD TRAIL ACCESS

- ⊖ Not allowed on the W&OD Trail



NOT PERMITTED
ON A VIRGINIA HIGHWAY

NOT STREET LEGAL AS AN E-BIKE

A MESSAGE FROM THE TOWN OF VIENNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

RELEVANT VIRGINIA CODE SECTIONS & TOWN ORDINANCES

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VA. CODE § 46.2-904.1	Electric Power-Assisted Bicycles
VA. CODE § 46.2-906.1	Local Ordinances May Require riders of bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices; and electric power-assisted bicycles to wear helmets.
VA. CODE § 46.2-908.1	Electric mobility devices and related vehicles.
VA. CODE § 46.2-1015	Lights on bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, personal delivery devices, electric power assisted bicycles, mopeds, and motorized skateboards or scooters.
VA. CODE § 46.2-908	Registration of Bicycle, Electric personal assistive mobility device, electric personal delivery device, and Power-Assisted Bicycle Serial Numbers
VA. CODE § 46.2-904.1(D)	Tampering With or Modifying an Electric Power-Assisted Bicycle

CHAPTER 21

TOWN OF VIENNA

Town code pertaining to any bicycle, electric personal assistive mobility device, toy vehicle, or electric power-assisted bicycle.

ARTICLE 2. OPERATION OF BICYCLES

ARTICLE 3. BICYCLE EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

A MESSAGE FROM THE TOWN OF VIENNA POLICE DEPARTMENT