

E-Bike Safety & Regulation in Maui County

- ▶ Clarifying What Is Legal, What Is Not, and Why It Matters



Why This Topic Is Before the Committee

- ▶ Rapid growth of e-bikes and e-mobility
- ▶ Public confusion over legality
- ▶ Safety concerns for youth and pedestrians



What Is an E-Bike (Legal Definition)

- ▶ Operable pedals
- ▶ ≤ 750 -watt motor
- ▶ 20-28 mph assist limit
- ▶ Bicycle, not a motor vehicle



Know the Difference: What Is Legal on Public Streets

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE	E-Bike Class 1	E-Bike Class 2	E-Bike Class 3	Moped Class C	Electric Foot Scooter	Not Street-Legal
 <p>More info at: HBL.org/EBIKES</p>	<p>Low-speed electric bike (2-3 wheels) with operable pedals, motor under 750 watts. Pedal-assist up to 20 MPH (no throttle).</p> 	<p>Low-speed electric bike (2-3 wheels) with operable pedals, motor under 750 watts. Pedal-assist and throttle up to 20 MPH.</p> 	<p>Low-speed electric bike (2-3 wheels) with operable pedals, motor under 750 watts. Pedal-assist up to 28 MPH.</p> 	<p>Limited use motorcycle. Low-speed, 2-3 wheels. Motor 2hp (1,492 watts) or less, direct/automatic power drive (no clutch/gear shift)</p> 	<p>Device with handlebars, a floorboard or seat, weighing less than 75 lbs. Can be powered by electric and/or human power</p> 	<p>The following are examples of e-mobility devices that are not permitted on public streets</p>  <p>Moped without license plate or VIN</p>  <p>E-Moto/Dirt Bike</p>  <p>Electric unicycle</p>  <p>Hoverboard</p>  <p>Electric skateboard</p>
How fast can it go?	20 MPH	20 MPH	28 MPH	20 MPH	15 MPH	
Do I need a license?	No	No	No	Yes, Type 1 with Permit	No	
Do I need to register my vehicle?	Yes, must have registration sticker	Yes, must have registration sticker	Yes, must have registration sticker	Yes, must have license plate & safety inspection	No	
Where can I ride?	Anywhere bicycles are allowed	Anywhere bicycles are allowed	Anywhere bicycles are allowed	Right lane and/or shoulder (except when making a left turn)	Regulated by County Ordinance §15-18.10	
Do I need to wear a helmet?	Under 18 must wear helmet	Under 18 must wear helmet	Under 18 must wear helmet	Under 18 must wear helmet	Under 16 must wear helmet	

Important Clarification

- ▶ Any device that:
 - ▶ Exceeds 750 watts, or
 - ▶ Provides motor assistance above 28 mph, or
 - ▶ Operates like a motorcycle
is not an e-bike under federal or Hawaii law
- ▶ Such devices are treated as motor vehicles and require proper registration, licensing, and insurance



How E-Bike Motors Are Activated (Why It Matters)

- ▶ Throttle-activated: immediate acceleration, higher risk
- ▶ Pedal-assist (cadence sensor): more predictable but can surge
- ▶ Pedal-assist (torque sensor): smooth, proportional, safest

If it speeds over 28 mph it is not an E-Bike. It is an unregistered motor vehicle



Why This Is Not an E-Bike

- ▶ Exceeds power and speed limits (750 Watts 28 MPH)
- ▶ Motorcycle-style controls
- ▶ Has no operable pedals
- ▶ Not allowed on bike paths



High-speed e-bikes growing safety concern



Hawaii vs. California (2026 Context)

- ▶ HI: Registration, youth helmets
 - ▶ Minimum age: 15
 - ▶ Registration required (\$30)
 - ▶ Must meet federal low-speed e-bike definition
 - ▶ Comply with safety standards



New Safety Rules for E-Bike Riders CA 2026

- ▶ **Helmet Requirements**
 - Riders under 18 must wear a helmet
 - All Class 3 riders must wear a helmet, regardless of age
- ▶ **Visibility and Lighting**
 - Must have a red rear reflector or rear light
 - Visible from at least 500 feet at all times
- ▶ **Battery Safety (Important Update)**
 - Effective January 1, 2026
 - E-bike batteries must meet UL 2849 certification standards
 - Intended to reduce fire and explosion risks
- ▶ **Required Labeling - Permanent label must display:**
 - E-bike classification
 - Motor wattage
 - Top assisted speed

MBL Perspective: E-Bike Safety concerns Recommendations (1 of 2)

- ▶ Rapid growth of e-bikes and electric mobility devices on Maui
- ▶ Retail marketing often mislabels high-powered devices as legal e-bikes
- ▶ Large box retailers do not consistently follow Hawai'i e-bike laws
- ▶ Under HRS §291C-143.5, operators must be at least 15 years old – children under 15 should not be sold e-bikes



MBL Perspective: E-Bike Safety concerns Recommendations (2 of 2)

- ▶ All low-speed electric bicycles with wheels 20 inches or larger must be registered with the County (one-time \$30 fee)
- ▶ Local bike shops typically facilitate registration; this is not consistently done by all retailers. Online retailers and used e-bike market
- ▶ Biggest issue is lack of understanding of existing laws and rules – education needed
- ▶ Enforcement challenge: some individuals know the rules but choose not to follow them



E-Bike Safety Tips

- ▶ Follow traffic laws - same rules as traditional bicycles
- ▶ Be visible - use lights and reflective clothing, especially at night
- ▶ Inspect your e-bike regularly - brakes, tires, chain, and battery
- ▶ Use the right facilities - Class 3 e-bikes should not use sidewalks or multi-use paths
- ▶ Practice battery safety - use certified chargers and store batteries properly



Planning & Safety Takeaways

- ▶ Clarity improves safety
- ▶ Protects legitimate e-bike use
- ▶ Supports active transportation



Closing

- ▶ Know your e-bike class
- ▶ Follow Hawaii state law and Maui County rules
- ▶ Use protective gear and proper lighting
- ▶ Ride with aloha and awareness
- ▶ E-bikes are part of Maui's transportation future



Contact Information

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DRIP Committee

From: maui@hbl.org
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2026 1:54 PM
To: DRIP Committee
Cc: 'Lee Chamberlain'; Jarret P. Pascual
Subject: RE: Invitation to the Maui County Council's Disaster Recovery, International Affairs, and Planning Committee Meeting of Jan 28
Attachments: Maui_E-Bike_Safety_Briefing_Lee_WITH_IMAGES_final.pptx

You don't often get email from maui@hbl.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

Aloha!
Sorry for keep improving the presentation.
Here's the final version.
Please use this one.
Mahalo Nui!
Saman

From: maui@hbl.org <maui@hbl.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2026 9:26 AM
To: DRIP.Committee@mauicounty.us
Cc: 'Lee Chamberlain' <lachamb91@gmail.com>; 'Jarret P. Pascual' Jarret.Pascual@mauicounty.us
Subject: RE: Invitation to the Maui County Council's Disaster Recovery, International Affairs, and Planning Committee Meeting of Jan 28

Aloha!
Pls. use this presentation as updated.
Mahalo Nui!
Sorry for any inconvenience.

Mahalo!
Saman



Together, we can make our streets safer for everyone.

Saman Dias

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From: maui@hbl.org <maui@hbl.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 9:47 PM