

Is it an e-bike... or a motorcycle?

Know what you're buying (or what your child is buying) before you ride.

E-BIKE (legal, low-speed, no license needed)

- Pedals that actually work
- Motor: 750 watts or less
- Top assisted speed: 20–28 mph
- Looks and rides like a bicycle



E-MOTO (a motor vehicle, even if it's sold as an "e-bike," license required)

- Fake or no pedals
- Motor: 1,000–6,000+ watts
- Top speed: 30–65 mph
- Motorcycle-style frame, bench seat, heavy battery

If it looks like a dirt bike or moped, it probably is one — legally.



E-motos are motor vehicles but are often confused with e-bikes despite having vastly different performance and risks!

In Maryland, the difference is the law

Maryland defines a legal electric bicycle ([Md. Transportation Code §11-117.1](#)) as a bicycle with:

- Working pedals
- A motor of 750 watts or less
- Class 1 & 2: assist stops at 20 mph | Class 3: assist stops at 28 mph

Class 1–2 e-bikes can be ridden like a regular bike (no license, registration, or insurance required.) **Class 3** riders must be 16+.

All under-16 riders must wear a helmet ([§21-1207.1, §11-117.1](#)).

An “e-moto” is NOT an e-bike!

If a vehicle exceeds 750 watts or 28 mph, Maryland treats it as a moped or motor scooter, a motor vehicle, not a bicycle. That means:

- Title & registration required with MVA
- Insurance required
- A driver’s license or moped permit required (must be 16+)
- Operators must wear a DOT-approved motorcycle helmet and eye protection
- Riding one unregistered or unlicensed can mean citations, fines, and points against a driving record ([Md. Transportation Code §§11-134.1, 11-134.5, 16-104.2](#))
- Before you buy: Check the wattage, top speed, and pedal function, not just the label.

A message from:



WALK • RUN • RIDE • ROLL

Visit TalbotThrive.org/e-bike to learn more