NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
POLICE

Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPC)

As e-bikes grow in popularity people are being urged to make sure they know the law when it comes to owning and riding one.

Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPC) are legal but specific regulations must be adhered to, to be considered an EAPC.

These regulations ensure the e-bike is treated as a bicycle rather than a motor vehicle, meaning you don't need a license, registration, or insurance to ride it on public roads.

KEY LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR E-BIKES IN THE UK ARE:

PEDAL ASSIST:

The e-bike must be equipped with pedals that can propel it, and the electric motor should only provide assistance while you are pedaling

MOTOR POWER:

The electric motor's continuous rated power must not exceed 250 watts and this must be shown on the bike

SPEED LIMIT:

The motor's assistance must cut off when the bike reaches 15.5 mph (25 km/h) and this should be shown on the bike

AGE RESTRICTION:

Riders must be at least 14 years old

E-bike riders must follow the same rules as those who use regular bicycles, including traffic signals, road signs, and speed limits. If your bike is an EAPC then you can ride it on cycle paths and anywhere else pedal bikes are allowed.

You cannot ride e-bikes on pavements.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING AN E-BIKE:

THROTTLE:

Most e-bikes in the UK are not permitted to have a throttle/button that allows the bike to move without pedaling

REGISTRATION AND INSURANCE:

If an e-bike exceeds the 250W or 15.5mph limits, it's considered a motor vehicle and requires registration, taxation, and insurance

TYPE APPROVAL:

To be legal for road use, manufacturers need to obtain type approval for their e-bikes, ensuring they meet safety standards

In simpler terms, if your e-bike has pedals, a motor that cuts off at 15.5mph, and a power output of 250 watts or less, it's likely legal for use on UK roads.

Non-EAPC bikes that are not registered, taxed or insured will be seized by police, with riders facing a potential £300 fine, six points on their driving licence and any costs incurred by the recovery and storage of the bike when seized.

Any e-bike can be seized by police if it is used in a manner that causes alarm, distress or annoyance to members of the public.