

Electric Bicycles / Electric Scooter

Texas Transportation Code 551

In Texas, electric bicycles and electric scooters are generally legal, but the rules depend on the type of vehicle and how fast/powerful it is.

Electric Bicycles (E-Bikes)

Texas classifies e-bikes into 3 classes under Chapter 664 of the Texas Transportation Code.

Class 1

1. Pedal assist only
2. Motor stops assisting at 20 mph

Class 2

1. Has a throttle
2. Maximum assisted speed 20 mph

Class 3

1. Pedal assist
2. Maximum assisted speed 28 mph
3. Rider must be at least 15 years old

To qualify as a legal e-bike in Texas, it generally must:

1. Have fully operable pedals
2. Have a motor of 750 watts or less
3. Not exceed 28 mph assisted speed
4. Have a manufacturer label showing classification and specs

If it exceeds those limits, law enforcement may treat it as a motorcycle, moped, or off-highway vehicle.

For a legal Texas e-bike:

1. No driver license required
2. No registration required
3. No insurance required

Where E-Bikes Can Be Ridden

Texas generally treats e-bikes similar to bicycles and they are generally allowed on:

1. Roads
2. Bike lanes
3. Shared-use paths
4. Sidewalks

Texas does not have a statewide ban on riding bicycles or e-bikes on sidewalks, but cities can create local ordinances restricting them.

Electric Scooters

Texas law also recognizes “motor-assisted scooters” and they must have:

1. At least 2 wheels, a braking system, a deck to stand or sit on, a small gas or electric motor, and cannot be a pocket bike or mini motorcycle.
2. Scooters may be operated on streets with speed limits of 35mph or less
3. Across higher speed roads only at intersections
4. Riders must obey normal traffic laws
5. Are allowed on sidewalks and bike paths.
6. Cities can create additional local rules

Important Enforcement Issue in Texas

Many “electric dirt bikes” sold online are being called e-bikes even though they are not legal e-bikes under Texas law.

If the vehicle:

1. Goes faster than 28 mph
2. Has no pedals
3. Has more than 750 watts
4. Functions like a dirt bike/motorcycle

then it is usually NOT street legal unless registered as a motor vehicle

In In Texas, a vehicle is usually considered a legal e-bike if it:

1. Has pedals, is ≤ 750 watts or is ≤ 28 mph assisted speed

Once it exceeds those thresholds, it commonly moves into:

1. Motorcycle

2. Moped
3. Mini motorbike
4. Off-highway vehicle territory

and may require:

1. Registration, Insurance, a class M license and/or DOT equipment compliance depending on configuration and roadway use

In Texas, a bike-like vehicle with:

1. no pedals, an electric motor, and a max speed of 20 mph usually would **not** qualify as an electric bicycle because Texas requires e-bikes to have fully operable pedals.

The biggest factor is usually **vehicle design**, not just speed.

For example:

1. A stand-up electric scooter at 20 mph → likely a motor-assisted scooter.
2. A seated Vespa-style electric vehicle at 20 mph → likely treated as a moped.
3. A Sur-Ron style electric dirt bike limited to 20 mph → often treated by law enforcement as a minibike or motorcycle because it lacks pedals and resembles an off-road motorcycle.

Texas Transportation Code definitions do not neatly cover many modern electric minibikes, so enforcement often comes down to:

1. appearance,
2. intended use,
3. equipment,
4. VIN/title capability,
5. and whether it can legally be registered.

A vehicle that has no pedals, has motorcycle styling, and cannot be registered for roadway use

is commonly considered **not street legal** on public roads in Texas, even if electronically limited to 28 mph or less.

