

Adventure Cycling's Position on eBikes

Adopted Sept. 2020

As an organization that works to inspire, empower and connect people to bicycle travel, Adventure Cycling Association supports the choice of people to use eBikes for the purposes of bicycle travel according to current laws and regulations. We are inclusive of people who ride eBikes in the bicycle travel community because eBikes enable more people to discover the joy of bicycle travel. Thanks to improvements in mobility, cargo utility, and physical accommodation made possible by eBikes, the opportunity exists to expand the use of bicycles for transportation and recreation to new populations. In addition, eBike sales and popularity have increased exponentially over the past decade in the U.S. and beyond, and many people use eBikes for trips of all types.

Adventure Cycling also supports the use of eBikes as a cleaner alternative to fossil fuel use in transportation and recreation. The transportation sector is the largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 29% of the total emissions accelerating climate change ([EPA](#)). Studies have shown that replacing car trips was the top reason for purchasing an eBike ([NITC](#)), and total transportation emissions can be significantly reduced as e-bike use increases ([TREC](#)).

The bike industry, and a growing number of local, state, and federal jurisdictions define and regulate eBikes according to three classes:

- ▶ **Class 1:** eBikes that are pedal-assist only, with no throttle, and have a maximum assisted speed of 20 mph. They will not move without pedaling. Laws typically allow class 1 eBikes wherever a traditional bicycle can go.
- ▶ **Class 2:** eBikes that also have a maximum speed of 20 mph, but are throttle-assisted. Laws typically allow class 2 eBikes where traditional bikes can go, with occasional additional restrictions.
- ▶ **Class 3:** eBikes that are pedal-assist only, with no throttle, and a maximum assisted speed of 28 mph. They will not move without pedaling. Due to its higher maximum assisted speed, class 3 eBikes are typically restricted to roads and not allowed on non-motorized bike paths or trails.

All eBike classes limit the motor's power to 1 horsepower (750W), and like traditional bikes, eBikes are silent. Adventure Cycling encourages all eBike users (and all cyclists in general) to respect and follow [trail rules and etiquette](#), particularly in regard to appropriate speed.

The large majority of the 50,000+ mile Adventure Cycling Route Network follows paved and dirt roads which allow eBike use. Where our routes follow non-motorized trails and pathways or intersect public lands, we support the responsible use of eBikes according to local, state, and national laws and guidelines. Several Adventure Cycling guided tours allow participants to use eBikes, and where tours follow routes with eBike restrictions or where tours logistics make eBike use unfeasible, eBikes are not allowed.

Adventure Cycling's position on eBikes takes into account current eBike technology; should this technology change significantly in a way that causes disruption or negative consequences for bicycle travel, we would re-evaluate our position.



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