FORT·ATKINSON | POLICE DEPARTMENT | Adrian J. Bump, CHIEF OF POLICE

Electric Bicycle Laws in Wisconsin

Interest in electric bicycles is growing in Fort Atkinson. City staff receive many inquiries about the laws governing electric bicycle use. Most of these rules are state laws. The City of Fort Atkinson does not have the authority to enact laws that differ from these state laws. Below is a summary of the most important of these laws for people considering purchasing an electric bicycle, or people who already have an electric bicycle. The numbers in square brackets refer to the state statutes the information in each section is based upon. You can look these up yourself if interested in the precise wording of the laws. State statues can be found on the Wisconsin State Legislature's website http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes

Fort Atkinson Municipal Code of Ordinances
WI DOT Motorcycle, Moped, & other Two-Wheeled Motorized Vehicles

What is an electric bicycle?

E-bikes (Electric Bicycles) are defined in Wisconsin as bicycles equipped with fully operative pedals and an electric motor of 750 watts or less. They offer motor assist up to 20 mph (with or without pedaling, depending on the class) or up to 28 mph (with pedaling assist for Class 3).

E-bikes were legalized when the 2019 Wisconsin Act 34(link is external) was signed into law. This law:

- Created three categories of electric bicycles based on the type of motor and assistance it provides to the rider;
- Specifies that riders under the age of 16 cannot ride a Class C electric bicycle that allows the motor to assist riders up to 28 miles per hour;
- Requires manufacturers to permanently affix a label that provides the classification of the bicycle's motor; and
- Ensures that electric bicycles are regulated and treated in the same manner as human-powered bicycles, except that local municipalities or the Department of Natural Resources may prohibit the use of electric bicycles on a bike path under its jurisdiction.

Under Wisconsin law, e-bikes are defined into three classifications.

- **Class 1 E-bike:** Provides electrical assistance only while the rider is pedaling, assist up to 20 mph.
- **Class 2 E-bike:** Provides electrical assistance regardless if the rider is pedaling or not, assist up to 20mph
- **Class 3 E-bike:** Provides assistance only while the rider is pedaling, assist up to 28 mph. Must have a speedometer. May not be operated by anyone under the age of 16.

Rules of Road for Electric Bicycles

Electric bicycle operators follow essentially the same rules of the road as bicyclists. Note that these are basically the same rules as for motor vehicle drivers as well. There are a few notable exceptions which will be covered below. [346.02 (4), 346.79, 346.80]

Electric Bicycles and Shared Use Paths

The most common question we receive is can electric bicycles be used on the City's Glacial River Bike Path or other shared use paths. Under State Law an electric bicycle and an electric bicycle operator are afforded all the same rights and privileges and are subject to the same duties as a bicycle or an operator of a bicycle. [346.806]

Electric Bicycles and Sidewalks

Bicycles can only be used on sidewalks where a local ordinance permits this. Fort Atkinson does permit bicyclists to operate on sidewalks as long as they operate the bike with due care. However, bicycles are not allowed on sidewalks within the central business district of the city. When operating on a sidewalk, bicyclists must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and give an audible warning before passing. (**City Ordinance Sec. 94-213. - Riding on sidewalks)**

Electric Bicycle Registration

Electric bicycles are considered bicycles for vehicle registration purposes. There is no statewide bicycle or electric bicycle registration requirement. If you live in the city of Fort Atkinson, your electric bicycle needs to be registered with the city's bicycle registration program at the Fort Atkinson Police Department. [346.05(23), 349.18]

City Ordinance **Sec. 94-203. - Registration required**

If you have further questions, please contact
Fort Atkinson Police Department
920-397-9905