



Safe Bicycling in New York City

Bicyclists (including e-bike riders) must abide by the same traffic laws, rules, and regulations applicable to drivers. This includes obeying all traffic signals, regulation signs, and pavement markings. Bicycle riding is permitted on arterial and local streets throughout the City and must use designated bike lanes when available. Bicycle riding is prohibited on certain bridges, expressways, and highways unless a designated bicycle path exists.

A complete list of Rules and Regulations can be found:

- [NYC Administrative Code, Title 10](#) and [Title 19](#)
- [The Rules of the City of New York](#)
- [New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law](#)

Summary Listing of Bicycle Laws, Rules & Regulations

[New York City Traffic Rules and Regulations \(Title 34, Chapter 4\)](#)

[§ 4-01 \(b\) - Definitions](#)

Bicycle: A two- or three-wheeled device upon which a person or persons may ride, propelled by human power through a belt, a chain or gears, with tandem or tricycle wheels, except that it does not include such a device having solid tires and intended for use only on a sidewalk by pre-teenage children. For the purposes of these rules, the term “bicycle” includes pedal-assist commercial bicycles and bicycles with electric assist as defined below.

Bicycle with electric assist (“E-Bike”): A bicycle which is no more than thirty-six inches wide and has an electric motor of less than seven hundred fifty watts, equipped with operable pedals, and meeting the requirements of one of the following three classes:

- a) Class one: having an electric motor that provides assistance only when the person operating such bicycle is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when such bicycle reaches a speed of twenty miles per hour.
- b) Class two: having an electric motor that may exclusively propel such bicycle and unable to assist when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty miles per hour.
- c) Class three: having an electric motor that may exclusively propel such bicycle and unable to assist when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty-five miles per hour.

Commercial bicycle: A bicycle used to transport property in commerce.

Electric scooter: A device weighing less than one hundred pounds that (a) has handlebars, a floorboard or a seat that can be stood or sat upon by the operator, and an electric motor, (b) can be powered by the electric motor and/or human power, and (c) has a maximum speed of no more than twenty miles per hour on a paved level surface when powered solely by the electric motor.

Pedal-assist commercial bicycle: A device upon which a person may ride equipped with a belt, a chain or gears, fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than seven hundred fifty watts whereby such electric motor engages only when the operator is pedaling and the rate of speed of the bicycle is less than fifteen miles per hour, and disengages or ceases to function when (i) the operator applies the brakes, (ii) the operator stops pedaling, or (iii) the bicycle achieves a speed of fifteen miles per hour. A pedal-assist commercial bicycle shall not be equipped with any throttle capacity or have any additional motorized equipment affixed to it. A pedal-assist commercial bicycle shall not be more than eighty-four (84) inches in height or more than one hundred and ninety-two (192) inches in length, including any attached trailer. A pedal-assist commercial bicycle shall only be used to transport property in commerce. For the purposes of this definition, the term “trailer” means a device not propelled by its own power and towed by a pedal-assist commercial bicycle.

§ 4-02 (a) - Compliance with and Effect of Traffic Rules

The provisions of [NYC Traffic Rules](#) are applicable to bicycles and their operators.

§ 4-06 (b) – Speed restrictions

Bicycles with electric assist, electric scooters, and pedal-assist commercial bicycles may not exceed fifteen miles per hour except where a different speed limit for these vehicles is posted.

§ 4-07 (c)(3) - Restrictions on crossing sidewalks

Bicycles are not permitted to operate on sidewalks unless sign allows or wheels are less than 26 inches in diameter and bicyclist is twelve years or younger. See also [Administrative Code §19-176](#).

§ 4-12 (e) - Driver's hand on steering device

Bicyclists must have at least one hand on the steering device or handlebars when operating a bicycle.

§ 4-12 (j)- Commercial advertising vehicles

No person shall operate, stand, or park a bicycle on any street or roadway for the purpose of commercial advertising. Advertising notices relating to the business for which the bicycle is used may be put upon the bicycle when the bicycle is in use for normal delivery or business purposes, and not merely or mainly for the purpose of commercial advertising, provided that no portion of any such notice shall be reflectorized, illuminated, or animated, and provided that no such notice shall be put upon the top of the bicycle and that no special body or other object shall be put upon the bicycle for commercial advertising purposes.

§ 4-12 (h) - Reporting accidents by drivers of other than motor vehicles

Bicyclists involved in an accident resulting in death or injury to person or damage to property must stop and give their name, address, and information concerning liability insurance coverage

to the party sustaining injuries or damage and must immediately report the accident to the nearest police station unless already supplied to a police officer on the scene.

§ 4-12 (o)(1) - Use of Roadways

Bicycles are prohibited from operating on expressways, drives, highways, interstate routes, bridges, and thruways, unless authorized by signs.

§ 4-12 (p) – Bicycles

- Bicyclists must use bicycle path/lane, if provided, except under the following situations:
 - When preparing for a turn at an intersection or into a private road or driveway.
 - When reasonably necessary to avoid conditions (including but not limited to, fixed or moving objects, motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, pushcarts, animals, surface hazards) that make it unsafe to continue within such bicycle path or lane.
- Bicyclists may operate on either side of one-way roadways that are at least 40 feet wide. A bicyclist must ride near as possible to either the left or the right hand curb or edge of the one-way roadway.
- Pedal-assist commercial bicycles:
 - No person shall operate or park a pedal-assist commercial bicycle on any public highway in NYC unless such bicycle has permanently affixed in a prominent location on the electric motor of the bicycle or elsewhere on the bicycle a legible original label of the manufacturer of the bicycle and/or of the electric motor containing the maximum motor-assisted speed and motor wattage of the bicycle.
 - All pedal-assist commercial bicycles and their operators must comply with the provisions of [Article 34 of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law](#) relating to the operation of bicycles, except as provided in section 4-02(e) of these rules.
 - A pedal-assist commercial bicycle that has been modified in any of the following ways shall not be considered a pedal-assist bicycle and may not be operated or parked on any public highway:
 1. Any modification that increases the output of such bicycle to seven hundred fifty watts or greater;
 2. Any modification that prevents the motor from disengaging when (i) the operator applies the brakes, (ii) the operator stops pedaling, or (iii) the bicycle achieves a speed of fifteen miles per hour; or
 3. Any modification that accelerates the speed of the pedal-assist bicycle motor by means other than pedaling.
 - Pedal-assist commercial bicycles may not be parked or left unattended on a sidewalk
- Commercial bicycles:
 - Commercial bicycles must display the name or symbol of the business and an ID number assigned by the business on both sides of each bicycle.

- Commercial bicycles may park or stand in commercial bicycle loading only zones when actively engaged commercially in loading or unloading property and for the duration of the posted sign.
- Commercial bicycles may park or stand in the parking lane wherever commercial vehicles may park or stand including commercial vehicle metered parking or truck loading zones. and shall be exempt from paying parking meter fees. Commercial bicycles are exempt from paying meter fees.

§ 4-14 (c) – Restricted areas of parks

No person shall ride a bicycle in any park, except in places designated for bicycle riding; but persons may push bicycles in single file to and from such places, except on beaches and boardwalks.

New York City Administrative Code

§ 10-157 - Bicycles used for commercial purposes

- Operator must wear upper body apparel with business' name and operator's identification number on the back.
- Business must provide operator with a helmet according to Federal standards (16 CFR Part 1203).
- Business must provide at its own expense or ensure that each bicycle is equipped with a lamp, bell or other device capable of giving an audible signal from a distance of at least 100 feet (but not use of siren or whistle), brakes, reflective tires or alternately a reflector mounted on the spokes of each wheel.
- Operator must wear a helmet provided by business.
- Operator must complete a bicycle safety course prior to making deliveries or otherwise operating a bicycle on behalf of a business.
- Operator must carry and produce on demand a numbered ID card with the name, photo, and identification number of the operator as well as the name, address, and phone number of the business.
- Business must maintain roster of its bicycle operators that includes the name, home address, start date, discharge date (if applicable), identification number and date of completion of the bicycle safety course.

§ 19-176 - Bicycles operation on sidewalks prohibited

Bicycles ridden on sidewalks may be confiscated and bicyclists may be subject to legal sanctions. See also N.Y.C. Traffic Rules and Regulations §4-07(c).

§ 19-195.1 – Bicyclist rights and duties at intersection

A person operating a bicycle while crossing an intersection shall follow pedestrian control signals except where otherwise indicated by traffic control devices, and provided that such person shall yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk.

§ 20-327.1 – Bicycle parking spaces

Bicycles parked in large, public garages or parking lots should be parked at least two feet away from any motor vehicle and locked to a device that will secure the bicycle.

Bicycles unclaimed after 60 days will be considered abandoned and will become property of the operator of the garage or parking lot.

§ 28-504.1 - Request for bicycle access

Tenants of office buildings (that already have elevators and don't already provide bicycle parking) can request, in writing, that the building complete a bicycle access plan and provide bicycle access.

§ 28-504.5 Bicycle access to residential buildings

Owners of residential buildings may not bar tenants from transporting their bicycle into their dwelling unit via a passenger elevator (unless there is another designated elevator for this purpose).

§ 28-504.6 - Foldable bicycles on passenger elevators in residential buildings

Building owners cannot bar tenants from bringing foldable bicycles in elevators in residential buildings.

New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law

§ 102-a – Definition of Bicycle Lane

A portion of the roadway which has been designated by stripping, signing and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicycles.

§ 102-b – Definition of Bicycle Path

A path physically separated from motorized vehicle traffic by an open space or barrier and either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way and which is intended for the use of bicycles.

§ 375(24-a) - Equipment

Bicyclists cannot wear more than one earphone attached to radio, tape player or other audio device while riding.

§ 1231 - Traffic Laws Applicable to Persons Riding Bicycles

Bicyclists are granted all rights and subject to all duties applicable to operator of vehicle except where not applicable.

§ 1232 - Riding on bicycles

Bicyclists must:

- Sit on a permanent seat;
- Have both feet on the pedals;
- Carry only number of persons for which it is designed and equipped.

§ 1233 - Clinging to vehicles

No person riding a bicycle shall attach the bicycle or themselves to any vehicle being operated on a roadway.

§ 1234 - Riding on roadways, shoulders, bicycle lanes and bicycle paths

Must ride bicycle on the right side of the roadway (some conditions and exceptions apply – see also N.Y.C. Traffic Rules and Regulations Section 4-12 above);

No more than two abreast.

§ 1235 - Carrying articles

Bicyclists must keep at least one hand on handlebars when carrying packages.

§ 1236 - Lamps and other equipment

Bicyclists must have the following equipment:

- White headlight and red taillight (must be used from dusk to dawn)
- Bell or other audible signal (not whistle)
- Working brakes
- Reflective tires and/or other reflective devices

§ 1237 - Hand and arm signals

- Bicyclists are required to use hand signals to turn left and right and to stop or decrease speed
- Bicyclists can use either hand to signal a right turn.

§ 1238 - Biking with children

- A child under the age of one year old is not permitted to be transported by bicycle.
- A child age one to four years old must be carried in a properly affixed child carrier when being transported by bicycle.
- A child age one to thirteen years old must wear an approved helmet while riding or being transported by bicycle.
- You must wear a helmet when riding a class 3 e-bike (which allow assistance up to 25 miles per hour).

§ 1240 and § 1241 – Reporting accidents to the police

Bicyclists must report any incident that causes physical injury to another person due to the operation of a non-motorized (including, but not limited to bicycles, in-line skates, roller skates, and skateboards) to a police officer or the nearest police station or judicial officer and include their name and address.

See also Section 4-12(h) above.

§ 1242 – Bicycles with electric assist (E-bikes)

E-bike riders are subject to the same rules that apply to traditional, non-electric bikes

E- bikes must have a motor that automatically disengages when applying brakes or when rider stops pedaling, or have a switch or mechanism that, when used, will disengage the electric motor.

You must be at least 16 years old to operate an e-bike.

§ 1242-a – Operating E-bikes under the influence of alcohol or drugs

No person shall operate an E-bike while intoxicated: either with 0.08 percent or greater of blood-alcohol concentration by weight, or impaired by drugs.

§ 1281 – Electric scooters

Electric scooter operators must obey the same traffic laws as bicyclists and drivers.

§ 1282 – Operating electric scooters

- An electric scooter may only carry one person at a time.
- A person must be at least 16 years old to ride an electric scooter.
- The speed limit for electric scooters is 15 mph.

§ 1283 - Clinging to vehicles

No attaching electric scooters or operator to another vehicle being operated on the roadway.

No person operating an electric scooter shall attach such scooter, or himself or herself, to any vehicle being operated upon a roadway.

§ 1286– Operating electric scooters

Operators under 18 must wear helmets.