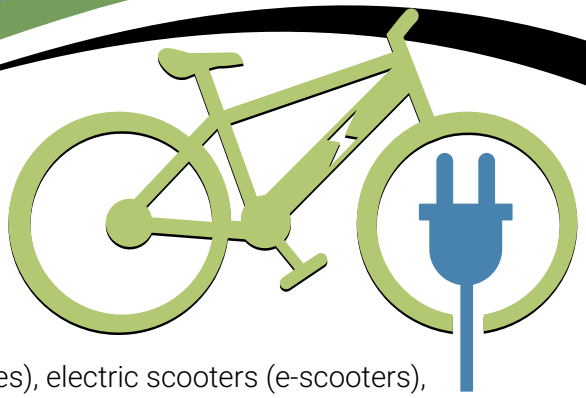
E-MICROMOBILITY IN MARYLAND SAFE RIDING GUIDE



E-micromobility vehicles include devices such as electric bicycles (e-bikes), electric scooters (e-scooters), and other small electric mobility devices. This guide is meant to help riders understand how to operate e-micromobility vehicles safely and legally in Maryland, as well as how they differ from traditional vehicles. Riders share roads, bike facilities, and paths with drivers, pedestrians, and other cyclists. Drivers should also be aware of e-micromobility riders and practice safe driving around them.

Under Maryland law, legal e-micromobility devices are treated similar to bicycles, which means riders have both the rights and responsibilities of other roadway users. E-motos, such as mopeds, golf carts, and electric dirt bikes, are not e-bikes; they have motors that exceed 750 Watts and/or allow for assisted speeds over 28 mph. **E-motos are not legal to ride in bike lanes or share-use bike paths.**

It is important for everyone to understand the difference between traditional vehicles and e-vehicles which are popular with youth, delivery drivers, and even older adults. Given growing popularity among young people, it's important to encourage safe riding practices with safety education and parent awareness-building.

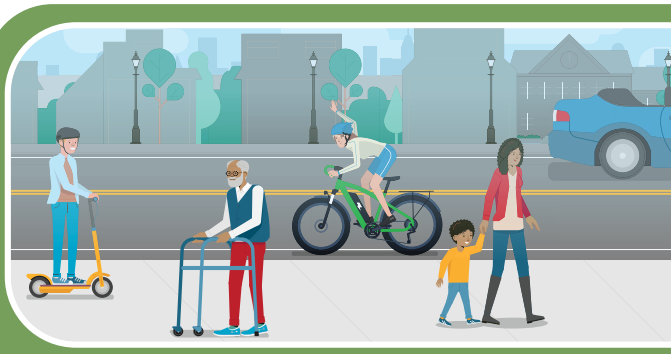
Safe Vehicle & Equipment

Legal vehicles should have a classification sticker and a battery with a UL certification sticker. Electric devices operate differently from traditional pedal bicycles, so riders should take time to understand how their vehicle works. Many shared vehicle programs provide operating instructions within their mobile apps.

If you're new to an e-bike or e-scooter, practice in a safe area before riding in traffic. **These vehicles can speed up much faster than a regular bike**, so start slowly and accelerate gently to stay in control. They're also heavier and faster, which means the brakes can wear out more quickly, so check them regularly to make sure they're working well. Before each ride, perform a quick **ABC** check:

- **A – Air:** Ensure tires are properly inflated.
- **B – Brakes:** Confirm brakes engage and stop the vehicle properly.
- **C – Chain/Components:** Check that moving parts and controls are functioning properly.

Secure any items you bring with you. Use racks, baskets, or backpacks so that belongings do not interfere with steering or balance. Helmets are required for riders under age 16 and strongly recommended for all riders. Most vehicles are only designed to carry one person (the rider). Carrying a passenger is only legal if your vehicle is designed to do so with a place for the passenger to sit. When riding at night or in low-visibility conditions, vehicles must have working lights and reflectors. Riders should also confirm their brakes are functioning properly and use audible warning devices, such as a bell or whistle, to alert others when necessary.



SHARING SPACE WITH PEOPLE WALKING

Be Courteous

- **Yield and follow proper crosswalk behavior.**
- **Walk your bicycle or device when needed.**
- **Avoid riding through heavily crowded walking areas.**

Pass Safely

- **To pass other people walking or rolling, use a bell or your voice to let them know.**
- **Reduce your speed.**
- **Leave a safe buffer of space between you and people walking.**

Safe Riding

All e-micromobility riders must follow basic traffic rules. Ride in the same direction as traffic, obey all traffic signals and stop signs, yield to pedestrians, and follow any posted local regulations. Riders should stay aware of their surroundings for safe riding and scan ahead for hazards such as potholes, debris, turning vehicles, and pedestrians. Avoid distractions such as phones or headphones that prevent you from hearing or seeing what is happening around you. Wearing bright colors or reflective clothing and using lights can help make you more noticeable to others.

Safe Riders should follow the simple rules of:

- ***Be Aware***
- ***Be Seen***
- ***Be Predictable***

Maintaining balance and control is also important. Keep both hands on the handlebars whenever possible and ride at a controlled speed. On shared paths and crowded areas, riders should travel slowly, generally around 10 mph or less, depending on local rules and conditions. In a shared space, you must look out for others to prevent crashes: ride predictably, use hand signals, and give an audible warning to people nearby when passing or changing directions.

There are practical techniques that can improve safety in traffic. Riders may use a box turn, a two-step maneuver where a cyclist goes straight through an intersection, then stops and reorients to complete a left turn with the next signal, to make left turns more safely. Ride in the travel lane when a roadway is too narrow for a car to safely pass, and ride outside of the "door zone" near parked cars to avoid suddenly opened vehicle doors.

Choosing a Safe Route

Understanding where you are allowed to ride is an important part of safe e-micromobility use. Depending on local rules, riders may use roads, bike lanes, and shared-use paths. Sidewalk riding may be restricted in some jurisdictions, so riders should check local regulations.

When selecting a route, the shortest path is not always the safest. A slightly longer route using quieter streets may provide a safer and more comfortable riding experience. Whenever possible, riders should prioritize:

- Bike lanes
- Low-speed neighborhood streets
- Shared-use paths where permitted

Planning your route ahead of time can help you stay safe and feel more confident. Try to avoid busy, high-speed roads, look for safer places to cross, and pay attention to road signs. Use bike-friendly maps or ask local biking groups for advice on safer routes.

It can also help to test a new route when you are not under time pressure. For example, riding your commute route on a weekend allows you to become familiar with the roadway before peak traffic hours. New riders should practice in low-traffic areas before riding in busier environments. Parents should closely supervise younger riders and ensure they understand safe riding practices.

Interacting with Cars and Other Vehicles at Intersections

At intersections and other crossing points, riders should come to complete stops and scan for traffic before proceeding. Making eye contact with drivers when possible can help confirm that you have been seen.

Ride with traffic in a straight, predictable manner so that drivers can anticipate your movements. Avoid riding within 3 feet of parked cars or in vehicle blind spots, particularly alongside large vehicles such as trucks or buses. If you cannot see the driver, they likely cannot see you. Use extra caution riding at night and during poor weather conditions when visibility and road traction may be reduced.

Use EXTRA CAUTION in places where vehicles and riders may interact.

Drivers may be:

- **Turning**
- **Entering Traffic**
- **Not Expecting People Biking or Rolling**

Conflicts are most likely at:

- **Intersections**
- **Driveways**
- **Parking Lots**

SERIOUS ABOUT SAFETY
MDOT MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION