To: CAHAN San Diego Participants
Date: May 28, 2026
From: Public Health Services

Health Advisory: Increase in E-Bike–Related Injuries in San Diego County: Prevention and Counseling Recommendations

Key Messages

- E-bike–related injuries are increasing in San Diego County, with 865 ED visits and 186 hospitalizations in 2024; youth are disproportionately affected.
- Clinicians should incorporate brief counseling and screening into routine care, including helmet use, age-appropriate riding, and legal e-bike classifications.
- Screen for e-bike use during injury and well visits and use ICD-10 codes (V28.01XA, V28.41XA) to improve surveillance.

Situation

May is National Bike Safety Awareness Month and San Diego County is experiencing a significant burden of injuries associated with electric bicycles (e-bikes), particularly among children and adolescents. E-bikes have become popular for recreation, commuting, and youth transportation. Their ability to reach higher speeds than standard bicycles increases the risk and severity of injuries, especially among younger riders. Increasing e-bike availability and use have contributed to rising hospitalizations, emergency department (ED) visits, and injuries. ICD-10 codes have existed since 2023 for e-bike injuries, however underreporting may be occurring due to misclassification of e-motorcycles.

Safety of and regulations surrounding e-bikes vary depending on the class. California Code, VEH 312.5 defines e-bikes in three classes:

- Class 1 – pedal-assist only
  - The motor engages only when the rider pedals. Maximum speed is 20 mph.
- Class 2 – throttle + pedal-assist
  - The motor can be propelled without pedaling in addition to pedal-assist. Maximum speed is 20 mph.
- Class 3 – speed pedal-assist
  - Some models include a throttle. Assisted speed is up to 28 mph. Not suitable for trails and bike paths.

In California, high-power (>750 motor watts) “e-bikes” are actually mopeds/motorcycles. Some e-bikes are modified to go beyond the limits established for their class.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that children age 9 through 12 years should not operate any product that travels faster than 10 mph.

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San Diego County E-Bike–Involved Injury Data (2024)

Outcome	All ages	<12 years of age
Emergency Department	865	56
Hospitalizations	186	7

Outcome	Central	East	North Central	North Coastal	North Inland	South
Emergency Department	81	90	157	246	194	97
Hospitalizations	29	15	34	48	31	29

California E-Bike Laws (Key Points for Patient Counseling)

- Class 1 & Class 2 e-bikes: No minimum age. Riders <18 years must wear a helmet.
- Class 3 e-bikes (≤28 mph): Riders must be at least 16 years old and wear a helmet.
- Passengers are only allowed if the bike is designed to carry them.
- Helmets are required for all riders and passengers under 18, regardless of class.

Actions Recommended

- ***Counsel*** patients and families on helmet use, bike class, legal e-bikes, age-appropriate riding, double-riding risks, and local and state laws.
- ***Screen*** for e-bike use during injury visits and well child visits, including bike type, training, road use, and experience level.
- ***Encourage*** safety training programs, such as that offered by the California Highway Patrol (Electric Bicycle Safety and Training | Rise 360) or the local training provided by Rady's Children Hospital, Safe Kids San Diego, Scripps, UCSD, and the San Diego Bicycle coalition (RideReadySD | E Bike Safety)
- ***Use*** ICD-10 coding for any e-bike related injuries (in a noncollision, non-traffic accident is V28.01XA, while traffic-related accidents use V28.41XA).

Resources for Provider and Patient Education

- California Highway Patrol. Electric Bicycle Safety and Training https://bikedanville.org/chp-electric-bicycle-safety-course/
- Ride Ready San Diego (Rady Children's Hospital, Safe Kids San Diego, Scripps, UC San Diego, San Diego Bicycle Coalition). E-Bike Safety Education RideReadySD | E Bike Safety
- Parent E-Bike Safety Webinar with Supvr Lawson-Remer & Scripps Trauma Prevention

Thank you for your participation.

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