

Know Before You Ride: What Every Paradise Valley Resident Should Know About E-Bikes, Scooters, and More

By Sergeant Kelly Ingram, Paradise Valley Police Department

Not all two-wheel rides are created equal — and knowing the difference could save a life.

From morning commutes to afternoon joyrides, electric bikes and scooters are popping up everywhere — and it's easy to see why. They're convenient, energy-efficient, and just plain fun. But with the surge in popularity comes a wave of confusion, especially when it comes to where, how, and if these rides can legally be used.

At the Paradise Valley Police Department, we've seen a growing number of calls involving e-bikes, mopeds, and other motorized personal vehicles. Many of these situations share something in common: the rider didn't realize they were doing anything wrong.

Unfortunately, those good intentions can still lead to unsafe conditions — and, in some cases, serious consequences.

To get a better understanding of how people are buying and using these devices, we teamed up with Erik's E-Bikes in Scottsdale — a local shop that's passionate about getting people riding smart from day one. Their staff, including General Manager Andrew Stimpson, shared some of the most common questions, misconceptions, and safety concerns they hear from customers.

"A lot of first-time buyers are surprised by how much they don't know — especially when it comes to basic rules like helmet use, where they can ride, and whether their e-bike even qualifies as an e-bike under Arizona law," said Andrew. *"Most people just assume they're all the same, but there's more to it than meets the eye."*

"Safety is our number one priority," said Chief Freeman Carney, Paradise Valley Chief of Police. *"That includes everyone on the road — drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and now, e-riders. It's not just about following the rules. It's about making sure we all get home safely."*

In Arizona, not all micromobility devices are treated the same. The difference between a Class 2 e-bike and a moped might not be obvious at first glance — but it can mean the difference between a legal ride and one that requires registration, insurance, or even a motorcycle endorsement with your driver's license. Riders are often surprised to learn what's required of them.

The good news? A little bit of education goes a long way. Whether you're buying your teen their first e-bike or using a scooter for short trips around town, the best first step is learning the basics. (Hint: you'll find a quick comparison nearby to help you sort it all out.)

“There are real differences between Class 1, 2, and 3 e-bikes, and it’s critical to understand what you’re getting into,” Andrew explained. “That’s why working with a reputable, knowledgeable shop matters — we help people choose the right bike and make sure they know how to ride it safely and legally.”

We’re grateful to shops like Erik’s E-Bikes that take the time to educate buyers, not just sell to them. But if you’re unsure about the legal side — what’s allowed on sidewalks, what needs a license, or what helmets are required — don’t hesitate to reach out to the Paradise Valley Police Department. We’re always happy to help clear things up.

At the end of the day, it’s not about writing tickets — it’s about preventing injuries and saving lives. Knowing the rules isn’t just smart... it’s essential.

Ride safe, ride smart — and ride informed.

If you have questions about local laws, classifications, or where certain devices can be used, don’t hesitate to reach out to us — we’re here to help. For more information, contact the Paradise Valley Police Department or visit paradisevalleypd.org