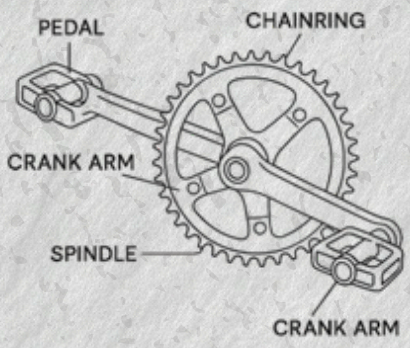
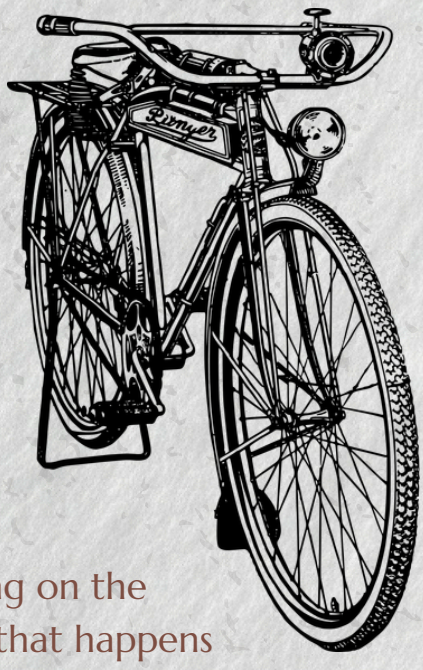
E-BIKE AWARE

By Earl Haugen, Chairperson
Pedestrian and Wheeled Sports Subcommittee

Have you thought about purchasing an e-bike for your kid? Did you know that you can reduce the speed an e-bike can go? Wait...What?!?



E-bikes that are commonly for sale are made to top out at a speed of 20 mph (Class I & II max out at this speed; Class III e-bike can go up to 28 mph). At that speed, the assistance from the motor is shutoff. An e-bike works by having an electric motor assist in propelling the bicycle either while pedaling or by turning a throttle on the handlebar (pedaling is still required). A key point is that the e-bike must be able to be propelled by turning the pedals. But more on that later. 20 mph is pretty speedy to be going on a bike...especially for kids. An average adult while pedaling a regular bicycle can typically go at a pace of 10-14 mph - with some effort. Kids typically average about 6-8 mph once they have mastered the act of bicycling.



We at Safe Kids GF know that age and developmental level should be a critical factor when considering an e-bike. We know that for the younger kids, bicycling riding on sidewalks in residential neighborhoods is more the norm. Cyclists riding on the sidewalk should be following the same rules as a pedestrian. Going at a top speed allowed by an e-bike, together with a skill set of a young cyclist is just a crash waiting to happen. And don't forget - most residential sidewalks have many driveways to consider as well.

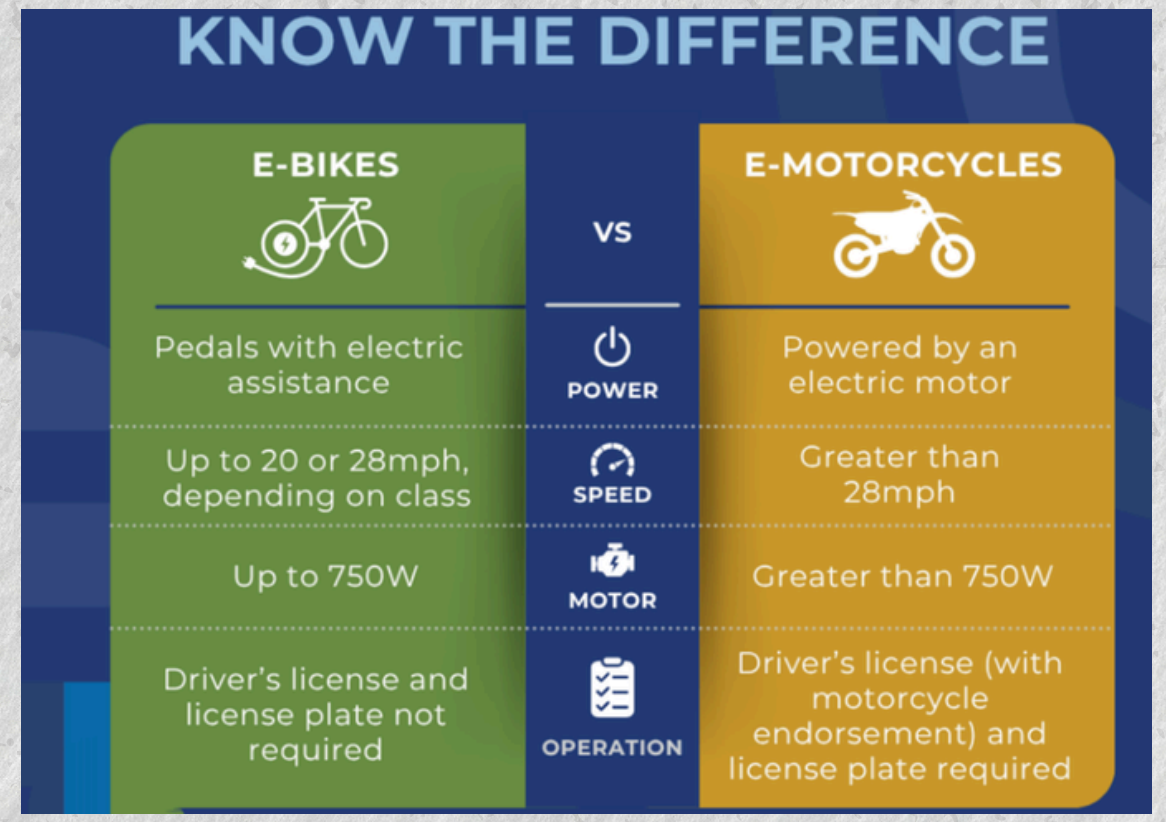
As a rule, kids age 10 or younger should probably not be taking on the responsibilities of controlling an e-bike. But there is no magic that happens once you reach age 11. Parents and guardians should be aware of the bike riding skills and abilities of their young bicyclists. If you feel comfortable with their skills/abilities, go ahead and consider letting them handle an e-bike. As they mature and reach age of 14 or so, then e-bikes become more controllable by the young cyclist

Here are common ways to lower the speed through Settings Adjustments:

- Handlebar Display: Many e-bikes allow you to change the maximum speed for each level directly in the display settings.
- Smartphone App: Use the manufacturer's app (if available) to fine-tune speed limits for individual assist levels.
- Developer Mode: Some bikes let you enter a maintenance or "developer" mode (often by holding display buttons) to adjust settings like wheel size (though this is usually for increasing speed, it shows deeper settings) or speed limiters.

While we are focused on e-bikes and programming their maximum speed, there are more types of two wheeled cycles powered by electric motors, usually chargeable battery driven motors.

In order for a cycle to be considered an e-bike, the bicycle must have pedals that are turned by the rider to propel the bicycle. E-motorcycles (e-Motos) may look like an e-Bike, but they are not propelled by pedals and are not considered an e-bike. E-motorcycles have other restrictions on who, where, and how they can be used.



Safe Kids Grand Forks provides bicycle education to 3rd graders at many of our local/regional schools annually. Be on the lookout for information regarding when your 3rd grader will have this opportunity. Getting a bike/wheeled sport helmet or having their current helmet adjusted can also be done for all grades at the school during this event.

As you ride with your kids, realize that how you behave is being seen and mimicked by them. Strive to set a great example to reinforce safe bicycling skills and abilities. Have fun while doing it.

And remember, wear a helmet!