



## Bicycle Transportation in Colorado

By Katie Ruedebusch

This *issue brief* outlines state regulations for bicycle transportation. It details general safety regulations, the regulations for riding an electric bicycle, and regulations regarding safety stops.

### General Regulations

**Regulations for riding a bicycle.** According to state law, persons riding a bicycle or electric bicycle:

- must not carry more people than the bicycle is designed to carry;
- must not attach themselves to a motor vehicle on a roadway;
- must ride in the right-hand lane when riding on a roadway at less than the normal speed of traffic – another lane may be used when turning left or overtaking a slower vehicle;
- may ride in the left lane if the roadway is one-way and there is enough room for other vehicles to safely pass;
- may not ride more than two abreast, except on paths set aside for the exclusive use of bicycles;
- must keep at least one hand on the handlebars at all times;
- must signal the intention to turn or stop; and
- must yield the right of way to pedestrians.<sup>1</sup>

**Safety requirements.** This section outlines various safety requirements drivers and cyclists must follow.

**Passing.** When overtaking a bicycle, a driver must have a three-foot separation from the cyclist, including mirrors or other projections.<sup>2</sup>

**Lights and reflectors.** All bicycle and electric bicycle riders riding between sunrise and sunset, or during conditions who otherwise impair visibility, must have lamp that emits white light at least 500 feet from the front. Bicycles and electric bicycles must also be equipped with a red reflector in the rear.<sup>3</sup>

**Braking.** Every bicycle or electric bicycle must be equipped with brakes that will enable the rider to stop within 25 feet from a speed of 10 miles per hour (mph).

### Safety Stops

**Intersections with stop signs.** Under state law, local governments may adopt regulations that allow bicycles and electric bicycles to pass through an intersection without stopping if the cyclist:

- slows to a reasonable speed;
- yields to vehicles and pedestrians; and
- can safely proceed or turn.<sup>4</sup>

**Intersections with stop lights.** Additionally, local governments may adopt regulations allowing bicycles and electric bicycles to turn right or proceed through an intersection with a red light after first stopping. Cyclists may not turn left when there is a red light unless the street is a one-way.

Local governments that currently allow safety stops include Aspen, Breckenridge, Dillon, and Summit County.

<sup>1</sup>Section 42-1-1412, C.R.S.

<sup>2</sup>Section 42-4-1003, C.R.S.

<sup>3</sup>Section 42-4-221, C.R.S.

<sup>4</sup>Section 42-1412.5, C.R.S.

## Electric Bicycles

In Colorado, electric bicycles are required to conform to one of three classifications, as shown in Table 1. All electric bicycles must be labeled with the bicycle's classification, top assisted speed, and motor wattage.

**Table 1**  
**Classifications of Electric Bicycles**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Class 1</b>	An electric bicycle that only provides assistance when the rider is pedaling; the motor ceases at 20 miles per hour (mph)
<b>Class 2</b>	An electric bicycle that provides assistance regardless of whether the rider is pedaling; the motor ceases at 20 mph.
<b>Class 3</b>	An electric bicycle that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling; the motor ceases at 28 mph. Class 3 electric bicycles must have a speedometer.

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Source: Section 42-1-102 (28.5), C.R.S.

*Permissible routes for electric bicycles.* Class 1 and Class 2 electric bicycles are allowed on the same bicycle and pedestrian paths as conventional bicycles. Class 3 electric bicycles may not be ridden on a bicycle or pedestrian path unless the path is within a street or highway, or permitted by a local jurisdiction. Local jurisdictions also have the authority to prohibit the operation of any type of electric bicycle on any bicycle or pedestrian path under their jurisdiction.

## Bike Share Programs

Over 130 cities in North America offer bike share, including several communities in Colorado. Traditionally, bike share users pick up a bicycle at any self-serve bike station and return it to any other bike station located within the system's service area. Recently, the bike share market has seen a rise in "dockless" bike share where users access a bike anywhere in the service area through a smartphone app. These riders scan or type in a code on their phones to unlock the bike.

*Denver.* Denver Bike Sharing, or Denver B-cycle is a 501(c)(3) organization that operates a traditional bike sharing program in Denver. The system includes 737 bikes at 89 bike stations throughout Denver. B-cycle plans to transition to a smart or "hub" bike system in the future that allows users the option to leave bikes at any location or find/return bikes to designated "hubs."

In addition, Denver launched a [Dockless Mobility Vehicle Pilot Program](#) to test innovative transportation technology, including dockless bikes and scooters. To date, two companies, Lime and Jump, have dockless bike/e-bike permits. Also, Denver Public Works and the University of Denver are conducting a one-year pilot project with the dockless bike company, Ofo.

Several other Colorado communities, including Aspen, Aurora, Basalt, Boulder, Colorado Springs, Golden, and Fort Collins offer bike share programs.

## Bike Routes

Colorado is home to numerous bike trails and paths throughout the state. Several state agencies and organizations post information and trail maps for bicyclists in Colorado. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) provides cyclists with the [state bicycling manual](#) to ensure safe bicycling around the state. CDOT also hosts an interactive [Colorado Bicycle & Byways Map](#), which provides cyclists with route information, including traffic, amount of truck traffic, points of interest, and scenic byways. In addition to CDOT, Colorado Parks and Wildlife offers a smartphone app, Colorado Trail Explorer or COTREX. Users can browse featured routes, download maps for offline use, search trails by use, and participate in community discussion. Members of the public can download the app or access the app online here: <https://trails.colorado.gov/>.