

The safe use guide for e-bikes



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PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

The Transport Agency is pleased to introduce e-bikes as part of our vehicle fleet. The e-bikes are located in the Chews Lane, Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin offices. The e-bikes will be managed as per the fleet policy, as it pertains to other vehicles.

This *Safe use guide* (SUG) sets out to provide:

- an introduction to the e-bikes
- information for how to get started
- road user information for cyclists
- information about cycle champions.

Remember that e-bikes are a little bit different – use the parts of the SUG that are helpful to you. The SUG is supported by the vehicle fleet policy and other Transport Agency documents such as the official New Zealand code for cyclists. www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/cyclists-road-code/

INTRODUCING THE E-BIKES

Thank you for choosing one of our fantastic e-bikes for your workplace travel. The e-bikes are fun to use, easy to park at your destination and provide cost effective, efficient transport options.

Before you head out on the bike please ensure you have completed the online training module ([LINK HERE](#)), have completed practical induction with a cycle champion, and have read the following guide for some safety tips, best practice guidelines and how to use the bike.

In order to use the fleet bikes, ensure that you are familiar with, and understand the following main points. E-bike riders will need to:

- book using the fleet vehicle booking system
- know where to pick up, drop off and charge the bikes
- ensure all bikes and riders are legally compliant
- undertake the online training module and practical induction.

EQUIPMENT AND GEAR

Helmets

Helmets are required by law in New Zealand. Transport Agency supplied helmets are required to be worn. It is important to check the helmet for signs of wear and tear and any cracks as well as checking the straps for any fraying or crossing.

Helmet position – a simple fitting guide

1. Make sure that the front of the helmet sits two fingers width above your eyebrows.
2. Check that your ears sit in the middle of the V shape of the straps.
3. Check that when the chin strap is done up, just one (or two) fingers can fit between your chin and the strap.



Bikes

All of our bikes meet NZ standards and are regularly serviced to ensure our people have an enjoyable experience.

Clothing

Please wear clothing you are comfortable riding in and won't catch on the chain or on any other part of the bicycle (so no jackets or jumpers around the waist, and watch out for longer/fuller skirts). Shoe laces and trouser legs are also culprits for catching on the chain.

Closed toe shoes must be worn.

The bike will come with a reflective vest which is required in low light and both the bike and the bag come with reflective strips to help with visibility in low light.

A-B-C-quick check

Please ensure that each time you book a bike you perform an easy A-B-C quick check before you ride. If you notice any damage to the bike or helmet, do not ride the bike and contact Workplace Services who will arrange to get the bike maintained, or a helmet replaced.

A is for air: Check the air pressure, spin the wheels and make sure the tyres are not worn out. If the tyres are low, you can use the pump provided with the bike to top them up.

B is for brakes: Check to see that the wheels stop with each lever (roll the bike forward and apply one brake at a time) and that the brake levers don't hit the handlebars when squeezed.

Quick is for quick releases: Some bikes have quick releases on the wheels or the seat post. Check to make sure they are tight and closed properly.



CYCLE CHAMPIONS: LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

People wanting to use the e-bikes to attend meetings and site visits must be competent on-road cyclists. If not, you will need to complete some bike handling skills training or some on-road cycle skills training beforehand. Cycle skills training is offered in all cities where we have e-bikes. Check OnRamp for training contact details or contact your office cycle champions to organise a session for you or your team.

Cycle champions are competent and confident, capable bike riders and can assist with fleet familiarity for new or first time users. Cycle champions will provide a practical induction as well as encouragement and support. They will help with on-road riding skills and how to safely handle the e-bikes when not riding, eg moving in and out of the storage area. Check with your cycle champion to arrange some training or a test ride first to familiarise yourself with the bike's features and how it handles, or how to use the gears.

It is important that any damage sustained (to the bike or helmet) while out riding, or any obvious faults with the bike, eg flat tyres or worn brakes is reported immediately, by contacting Workplace Services as soon as possible after returning the bike. Additionally, if you sustain any injuries please report these to ZeroHarm as soon as you can to zeroharm@nzta.govt.nz

If the bike breaks down while you are out, walk the bike back to the office. If this is not possible, lock the bike to a secure pole, fence etc. and make note of the location of the bike. Contact Workplace Services as soon as you can and they will arrange its retrieval and repair.

Locks

Each bike comes with a lock and you will need to ensure you lock the bike up when you arrive. Please try to lock the bike to a secure bike rack, pole or fence.

RIDING THE E-BIKES

As leaders in workplace e-bike fleets in New Zealand, it is important that we comply with the road code and bike safety guidelines, eg not running red lights, not riding on the footpath, not riding too fast on shared paths or cutting in front of pedestrians. Be mindful that we are champions in this field and others will look up to us.

On-road

Before cycling on the road, you must know the road rules. They apply to cyclists as well as all other road users. For a more detailed explanation of the road rules as they apply to cyclists, please see *The official New Zealand code for cyclists*.

- Follow the road rules – stop for red lights and at pedestrian crossings.
- Ride predictably, in a straight line and signal your intentions clearly in advance.
- Ride no more than two abreast, and only where safe and appropriate.
- Courtesy works – a wave and a smile to other road users will help foster a more positive attitude to cyclists.

Much of what we need to consider when we are riding on the road is captured in the statement: **See, be seen, communicate**.

- **See** – ride in a position where you can see what is going on around you (including behind).
- **Be seen** – ride in a position where others can see you, away from the kerb and out from behind high sided vehicles, parked cars or fences.
- **Communicate** – communicate your intentions by using appropriate hand signals and making eye contact with other road users including pedestrians.



Before changing your position on the road, always take a quick look behind to make sure it is safe to change position, signal your intentions relative to where you want to go, and then (take another lifesaver look if needed) move to take up the new position again, relative to where you want to go. Look, signal, move.



Turning left

Slowing down or stopping

Turning right, passing
or pulling out

Remember to be friendly and courteous when other road users give way, slow down or are generally considerate to you as a cyclist. A smile and a wave go a long way to building good relationships with other road users.

Shared pathway

It is normally illegal to ride on footpaths, unless delivering mail or if you have a smaller wheeled bicycle, but some councils have created shared paths that both cyclists and pedestrians can use.

If you are riding on a shared path you should:

- keep left
- let pedestrians know you are there by politely calling out or ringing a bell when you are approaching them from behind
- pass on the right when possible – unless the pedestrians are on the right in which case pass them in the safest way you see fit
- slow down before you pass pedestrians so as not to startle them (try and avoid the whoosh factor)
- ride defensively and cycle at a speed that is appropriate to the surroundings
- look out for traffic going in and out of driveways – vehicles from driveways need to give way to those on the shared path, but often drivers may not expect fast traffic on the shared path
- be careful at intersections and give way to motor vehicles if you need to.

Other considerations

Our vehicle fleet policy also covers our bike fleet and states that users must not have consumed any alcohol or taken drugs (including over the counter and/or prescription medication) that might impair your ability to ride.

Ensure that you choose a route that you are comfortable with, taking into consideration the time of day and the traffic flow or number of pedestrians.

Things to remember with the e-bikes

We all know the saying ‘it’s just like riding a bike’, but however much e-bikes may look like regular bikes, they are a little bit different to ride. Easier and faster means new risks. Always look well ahead, scan for hazards and give yourself enough stopping room.

Adjust the e-bike where you can to fit you, make sure you have the correct saddle height for you (the optimal saddle height is when your leg is fully stretched when your heel is on the pedal) so that you pedal with the balls of your feet.

Range and charging – the range of our bikes with full charge in eco mode is 80km. On full power with hills, it would be 25km. Please ensure you plug the bike into charge when you return the bike to the office.

Balance – e-bikes are usually heavier than normal bikes due to the engine and battery. Also, the centre of gravity may be shifted slightly, depending on the type of engine and location of the battery. Ride a few laps around a traffic-free area to get used to it. A heavier rear or front can take some getting used to.

Handling – the e-bike display should be easy to read and show what you want to know. The buttons should be easy to reach and easy to operate, but you might want to practise ahead of your first ride.

Starting and stopping – having a play with starting and stopping the e-bike ahead of your first ride is a good idea, as depending what kind of assist it has, it may have a delay and then a sudden push forward when you start. Usually, a little momentum will be enough to get you going, as per starting protocol, maintain a pedal ready position and remember to have your hands on the brakes until you are ready to set off.

Be prepared for longer stopping distances when riding heavier e-bikes. As usual stop using both your brakes, squeeze them evenly and consistently to slow down and come to a stop.

Test the brakes before your first ride and give yourself some time to get used to them. Simply stopping pedalling doesn't always help, especially if the motor assist has a time lag.

However, applying the brakes automatically cuts the motor. If you are stopping or about to go up-hill, remember to change down (easier) one or two gears to help with this.

Traffic lights – make yourself clearly visible at the front of any stationary traffic if you can. The e-bike has an advantage here, as you can start faster and get ahead of cars, or simply flow with the surrounding traffic. Remember to have the brakes on when standing (left foot down) at the lights.

Blind spot – when you are riding on the road, make yourself visible in traffic, do not ride up the side of high-sided vehicles or position yourself next to trucks or vans.

Speed – keep in mind that other road users perceive you as a bicycle (and may underestimate your speed) and therefore may make turns in front of you or across your path. Road position can help here.

Overtaking – as an e-bike rider, you will encounter slower cyclists. Pass any slower road users by first looking behind and then making yourself known by politely calling out (on your right) or ringing a bell from behind that you are about to go past them.

Bumps – beware of hazards, small obstacles and rough surfaces. Your increased speed and weight makes small obstacles, eg train tracks or kerbs, different to handle. If you can't avoid them, slow down, hold on to your handlebars and stand up on your pedals and always ride over on a 90° angle.

ROAD MARKINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Sharrows

A sharrow indicates places where cyclists are encouraged to move more toward the centre of the lane to reduce risk.



Advanced stop boxes

The green stop boxes at intersections with a bicycle symbol painted on them are for people on bikes only. They give people on bicycles a head start when the light turns green and improves safety by making them more visible to people in vehicles.

All our people must be familiar and comply with the requirements laid out in the Transport Agency Drug and Alcohol policy and the Transport Agency's *Code of conduct*.



Bus lane

Bikes can use bus lanes, but when sharing the lane with the bus, remember to take the lane and avoid riding up the inside of the bus next to the kerb.



Bus only lane

People on bikes cannot use bus only lanes.

