



Operation of Motorized Bicycles in the City of Tucson

In September 2006, the Tucson City Council adopted an ordinance regarding the operation of motorized bicycles within the city limits. **Operators of motorized bicycles and other vehicles remain responsible for ensuring their own safety and being in compliance with all laws affecting traffic movement on public roadways.**



What is a motorized bicycle?

Arizona State law, Title 28, defines motorized electric or gas powered bicycles or tricycles as a bicycle or tricycle that is equipped with a helper motor that has a maximum piston displacement of 48 cubic centimeters or less, or an electric motor of less than 750 watts (1 hp), that may also be self-propelled and that is operated at speeds of less than twenty miles per hour.

If you exceed 20 mph you are no longer covered under this exemption – this means you will be treated as a moped and subject to license, registration, insurance and other operational conditions and will be subject to a citation(s) by the Police Department and your vehicle could be towed under the mandatory impound law.

What are the requirements for operation of motorized bicycles in Tucson?

- No vehicle title, registration, insurance, emissions or driver license required as long as the motorized bicycle operates in compliance with the above definition (**operated at less than 20 mph**).
- An operator must be **at least 16 years old** to drive a motorized bicycle in the city limits. Operators and passengers under the age of 18 are required to wear a certified helmet.
- Motorized bicycles may be ridden in rights-of-way designated for the exclusive use of bicycles (bike paths) as long as the motorized bicycle operates in compliance with the speed restrictions. **They cannot be operated on any public sidewalk, multi-use path, and shared-use path or on any designated pedestrian path in any public park. In addition, they may not be ridden through any underpass or at any other location where signs are posted prohibiting bicycling.**
- A motorized bicycle may not carry more persons at a time than the number for which it is designed and equipped.
- **If used at nighttime**, you must have a lamp on the front that emits a white light visible from a distance of **at least 500 feet** and a red reflector in the rear visible 50 feet in all directions and 300 feet to the rear. A motorized bicycle may have a lamp that emits a red light visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear in addition to the red reflector.

Violations of this Tucson City Code are a civil traffic violation punishable by a mandatory minimum fine of one hundred dollars (\$100) in addition to any other fines and penalties.

NOTE TO PARENTS AND LEGAL GUARDIANS

The parent, guardian, or legal custodian of any minor shall not authorize or knowingly permit such minor to violate any of the provisions of this article. If a fine is imposed upon a minor who is found to be in violation of this ordinance, the parents or legal guardian having custody or control of the minor shall be jointly and severally liable with the minor for payment of the fine, whether or not the parents or guardian knew of, or anticipated, a violation of this section.

Remember – it is your responsibility to know your vehicle and skills, to obey traffic laws and to be courteous in sharing the roadways with other vehicles and pedestrians. You should also consider using additional equipment such as a speedometer and the brightest possible nighttime lighting to ensure your visibility and safety and to assist you in compliance with this law.