

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Officer Anthony Carrasco at (619) 341-9809 or ajcarrasco@pd.sandiego.gov

Regional Agencies Raising Awareness of E-Bike & E-Motorcycle Safety

RISING TREND OF YOUTH DRIVING HIGH-SPEED MOTORCYCLES NOT MEANT FOR NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

San Diego — Law enforcement agencies from across San Diego County and healthcare professionals came together today to raise awareness of the need for safety when driving electric bicycles (E-Bikes) and electric motorcycles.

The press conference highlighted the growing safety concerns and enforcement challenges surrounding the illegal and unsafe operation of electric off-highway motorcycles, often marketed or mistaken for e-bikes. While California law allows Class 1, 2, and 3 e-bikes to operate on public roadways and bike paths, high-powered electric motorcycles are not street legal. These vehicles cannot be registered for street use, lack the required safety equipment, and do not meet Department of Motor Vehicles standards for operation on public roads. Riders who operate them in traffic face citations, fines, and the impound of their vehicles.

E-Bike riders are reminded of these safety tips to avoid posing a harm to themselves or others.

- Ride in bike lanes, roads, or bike paths that allow them.
- Do not ride on sidewalks, near businesses, or crosswalks (for pedestrians only).
- Ride in the same direction as traffic and use bike lanes when available.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals. Bicyclists must obey all traffic laws like a motor vehicle.
- Passengers are only allowed if the bike is designed for them.
- A helmet is required for riders under 18 (all ages for Class 3).

“This is about education, safety, and protecting our communities,” said Commander Benjamin Kelso of the San Diego Police Department. “Families need to know the difference between a legal e-bike and a high-powered motorcycle that are not street legal to ride. These vehicles are putting young riders, drivers, and pedestrians at risk.”

"Many of these patients are children and teenagers who suffer broken bones, head trauma and other preventable injuries," said Scripps Mercy Hospital San Diego medical director of trauma Vishal Bansal, M.D. "Education and awareness are key because one wrong decision on these machines can change a life forever."

"As physicians, we are seeing a rise in serious injuries connected with these vehicles and that is very concerning," said Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla trauma surgeon Nina Lu, M.D.

Agencies that participated include the San Diego Police Department, San Diego County Sheriff's Office, California Highway Patrol, Oceanside Police Department, Chula Vista Police Department, La Mesa Police Department, Escondido Police Department, Coronado Police Department, Carlsbad Police Department, National City Police Department, San Diego Unified School District Police Department, San Diego Harbor Police Department, El Cajon Police Department, and California State Parks. Scripps Health was also in attendance.

To help residents better understand these laws, the San Diego Police Department and many agencies who attended today's event have resources available with safety information regarding e-bike safety. You can visit sandiego.gov/police/bike-safety for more information.

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