



# SAN JOSE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## TRAINING BULLETIN

**TO: ALL DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL**

**FROM: Paul Joseph**  
Chief of Police

**SUBJECT: DEFINITION OF ELECTRIC  
BICYCLES AND SCOOTERS**

**DATE: June 12, 2025**

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Bulletin #2025-012

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In April of 2023, the Department began using the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) to report its crime statistics. As a result of the switch, the Department must update the way its members define and report vehicles and specialty vehicles, including electric bicycles and motorized scooters. Each of the following definitions is from the California Vehicle Code (CVC).

A motor vehicle is defined in [CVC section 415\(a\)](#), in part, as being self-propelled. The definition of a motor vehicle does not include a self-propelled wheelchair, motorized tricycle, or motorized quadricycle, if operated by a person who, by reason of physical disability, is otherwise unable to move about as a pedestrian.

A vehicle is defined in [CVC section 670](#), in part, as a device by which any person or property may be propelled, moved, or drawn upon a highway, except a device moved exclusively by human power or used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks.

A motorcycle is defined in [CVC section 400](#), in part, as a motor vehicle having a seat or saddle for the use of the rider, designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground.

A bicycle is defined in [CVC section 231](#), in part, as a device upon which a person may ride, propelled exclusively by human power, except as provided in [CVC section 312.5](#), through a belt, chain, or gears, and having one or more wheels. A person riding a bicycle is subject to the provisions of the vehicle code specified in sections 21200 and 21200.5.

### ELECTRIC BICYCLES

Based on the above definitions in the CVC, Department members should consider an electric bicycle (E-bike) as a bicycle, not a motor vehicle. Operators of E-bikes are exempt from various laws and requirements that apply to motorcycles and automobiles. E-bike operators do not need any of the following:

- License;
- state or local vehicle registration;
- insurance; or
- license plates.

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An electric bicycle or “E-bike” is defined within [CVC section 312.5](#), in part, as a bicycle equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor of less than 750 watts (750W).

The State of California currently recognizes the following E-bike Classifications:

**Class 1 (Pedal Assist):** A low-speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle that is equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour. There is no age restriction for a Class 1 E-bikes.

**Class 2 (Self-Propelled):** A low-speed throttle-assisted electric bicycle that is equipped with a motor that may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle, and that is not capable of providing assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour. There is no age restriction for a Class 2 E-bikes.

**Class 3 (Pedal Assist):** A speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 28 miles per hour, and equipped with a speedometer. Currently, all riders must be at least 16 years old to operate, but no license is required. All Class 3 E-Bike riders under the age of 17 a must wear a helmet.

**Class 4 (Self-Propelled):** Some states and electric bicycle vendors have started a new Class 4 bicycle. A Class 4 bicycle is an electric bicycle with a motor output greater than 750W and without a max speed limit. This category is very similar to a moped or motorcycle classification in California. Class 4 E-bikes are not yet recognized in the State of California. Class 4 E-bikes are becoming more popular and pushing the vehicle code limits further.

E-bikes are classified as a bicycle and not as a motorcycle or motor vehicle. When investigating crimes involving an E-bike, Department members should consider appropriate vehicle code laws. Electric bicycles are expected to operate and follow-the rules of the road pursuant to [CVC section 21200\(a\)\(1\)](#).

### MOTORIZED SCOOTERS

A motorized scooter is defined within [CVC section 407.5\(a\)](#), in part, as any two-wheeled device that has handlebars and either a floorboard that is designed to be stood upon when riding or a seat and footrests in place of the floorboard, and is powered by an electric motor. This device may also be designed to be powered by human propulsion. Most electric scooters have a top speed of 25 mph.

### REPORTING

It is important to understand the different electric bike classification levels and motorized scooter definitions to properly report when one of these becomes lost, found, or stolen. As stated above, even though E-bikes are classified as bicycles, there are times when certain classifications of E-bikes need to be entered into the Stolen Vehicle System (SVS). As a result, newly created offense tables have been added to Versadex.

Department members must accurately determine the appropriate class level and the value of the E-bike or motorized scooter before the crime classification can be determined in the Versaterm Mobile Report Entry (MRE). This classification will also determine if it can be entered into the Stolen Vehicle

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System (SVS). Refer to the [Stolen E-Bike Versadex Training Guide](#) for additional detailed information on how to correctly enter electric bikes and scooters into the MRE and SVS.

The following table has been created as a quick reference guide to input E-bikes, motorized scooters, and other vehicles when documenting a lost, stolen, or located vehicle into the Versaterm Mobile Report Entry (MRE). The appropriate crime and offense code are necessary to assist the Department with accurate NIBRS reporting requirements.

| Applicable Offense Code | Crime Offense | E-Bike Class | Description   | Vehicle Type | Property Report | SVS Detail Page |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|---|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 240-7                   | 10851(a)      | 2,4          | FELONY: STOLEN E-BIKE (FULLY SELF PROPELLED)                  | 14           | No              | Yes             |
| 23H-78                  | 487(A)        | 1,3          | FELONY: STOLEN E-BIKE (W/PEDAL ASSIST) MORE THAN \$950        | 15           | Yes             | No              |
| 23H-83                  | 484(A)        | 1,3          | MISD: STOLEN E-BIKE (W/PEDAL ASSIST) LESS THAN \$950          | 15           | Yes             | No              |
| 23H-82                  | 484(A)        | N/A          | MISD: SCOOTER (NOT FULLY SELF PROPELLED) LESS THAN \$950      | N/A          | Yes             | No              |
| 23H-81                  | 487(A)        | N/A          | FELONY: SCOOTER (NOT FULLY SELF PROPELLED) MORE THAN \$950    | N/A          | Yes             | No              |
| 240-2                   | 10851(a)      | N/A          | FELONY: SCOOTER (FULLY SELF PROPELLED) or GOLF CART/ATV/MOPED | 13           | No              | Yes             |

Department members should refer to the above information, table, and hyperlinks for further information. Department members needing additional clarification should contact the Autodesk or OSSD for additional questions regarding when a vehicle, electric bicycle, or motorized scooter should be entered into SVS.



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