

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

ORDINANCE _____

BILL **61 (2024), CD1**

A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE

RELATING TO WHEELIES.

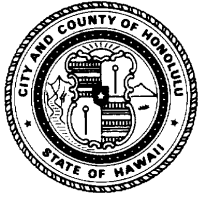
BE IT ORDAINED by the People of the City and County of Honolulu:

SECTION 1. Purpose. The purpose of this ordinance is to promote public safety for drivers and pedestrians using the public transportation system in the City and County of Honolulu by addressing the performance of stunts on public roadways.

A study by the State of Hawai'i ("State") Department of Health covering the past three years (2022 to 2024), found that Emergency Medical Services ("EMS") attended to numerous injuries resulting from incidents involving e-bikes ("e-bike incidents") on O'ahu and that the number e-bike incidents has shown a concerning upward trend in Hawai'i. The average number of reported e-bike incidents statewide more than doubled from an average of 10 per month in 2022 to 24 per month in 2024, with O'ahu experiencing a nearly threefold increase, from an average of seven per month in 2022 to 19 per month in 2024. O'ahu accounted for 75 percent of the statewide e-bike incidents, with most of the injured patients (65 percent) being transported by the EMS for further medical attention. The typical individual involved in an e-bike incident on O'ahu is a younger male, with the average age of an EMS-treated patient at 32 years old. On O'ahu, there is a clustering of injuries in individuals between the ages of 12 and 20. About half of the injuries occurred between 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., and head injuries, including traumatic brain injuries, were notably prevalent among patients.

Helmet usage among e-bike riders steadily declined during the study period, from 51 percent in 2022 to 29 percent in 2024. Helmeted riders were older, on average, and experienced fewer traumatic brain injuries than unhelmeted riders (13 percent vs. 32 percent). Additionally, unhelmeted riders were more likely to require hospitalization, with head injuries being most common among this group. These findings highlight the critical role of helmet use in reducing the severity of head and brain injuries, and the need for intervention to promote helmet usage.

The financial impact of e-bike-related injuries is significant, with average medical costs reaching \$16,162 for emergency department visits and \$121,445 for hospitalizations. Hospitalized patients often required extended care, including discharge to skilled nursing or rehabilitation facilities. The rising incidence of injuries, declining helmet usage, and the substantial medical costs associated with e-bike incidents underscores the urgency of implementing regulations to enhance safety, including mandatory helmet use for younger riders and educational campaigns regarding e-bike safety practices.



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Although the State Legislature did not pass e-bike legislation in 2024, the City Council ("Council") considers it necessary to address this emergent issue with new safety requirements to protect e-bike operators and the public at large from e-bike incidents. However, the Council acknowledges that the State Legislature plans to amend the Statewide Traffic Code in 2025 to address the issue, which may supersede some of the requirements set forth in this ordinance.

SECTION 2. Chapter 15, Article 24, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated by the Revisor of Ordinances and to read as follows:

"§ 15-24. Wheelies prohibited.

(a) *Definitions.* For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning:

Electric Bicycle. A bicycle equipped with a motor.

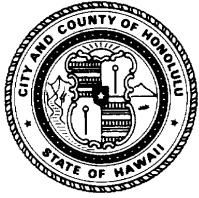
Moped. Has the same meaning as defined in HRS § 291C-1.

Motorcycle. Has the same meaning as defined in HRS § 291C-1.

Wheelie. A stunt performed by a person while riding on an electric bicycle, moped, or motorcycle in which the front wheel is raised so that the vehicle is balanced for a moment or longer on its rear wheel or wheels.

(b) *Prohibition.* A person may not perform a wheelie on any public street or roadway; provided that this subsection does not apply to a person performing a wheelie as part of a parade, tournament, or other activity permitted by the city."

SECTION 3. New ordinance material is underscored. When revising, compiling, or printing this ordinance for inclusion in the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021, the Revisor of Ordinances need not include the underscoring.



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SECTION 4. This ordinance takes effect upon its approval.

INTRODUCED BY:

Matt Weyer

Radiant Cordero

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

November 7, 2024
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

Deputy Corporation Counsel

APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 20 ____.

RICK BLANGIARDI, Mayor
City and County of Honolulu

Report Title:

Wheelie; Electric Bicycle; Bicycle Equipped with a Motor; E-Bikes; Moped; Motorcycle; Parade; Tournament; Street; Roadway; Safe Driving; Stunt; Prohibition

Description:

Prohibits the performance of wheelies on public streets and roadways by drivers of electric bicycles ("e-bikes"), mopeds, and motorcycles, except as part of a parade, tournament, or other activity permitted by the City. Defines a "wheelie" as "[a] stunt performed by a person while riding on an electric bicycle, moped, or motorcycle in which the front wheel is raised so that the vehicle is balanced for a moment or longer on its rear wheel or wheels." Defines "electric bicycle" as "[a] bicycle equipped with a motor."

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.