



# 10-4

A weekly Q&A  
with local  
law enforcement

Submit your question to [news@owatonna.com](mailto:news@owatonna.com) or 444-2379

## **Q: What are the laws regarding the use of motorized bicycles (mopeds) and electric-assisted bicycles?**

A: A motorized bicycle (moped) is defined by state statute 169.01(4a) having a “motor of a piston displacement capacity of 50 cubic centimeters or less, and a maximum of two brake horsepower, which is capable of a maximum speed of not more than 30 miles per hour on a flat surface.”

A electric-assisted bicycle is defined by state statute 169.01(4b) as “a motor vehicle with two or three wheels that: (1) has a saddle and fully operable pedals for human propulsion; (2) meets the requirements of federal motor vehicle safety standards in Code of Federal Regulations, title 49, sections 571.01 et seq.; and (3) has an electric motor that (i) has a power output of not more than 1,000 watts, (ii) is incapable of propelling the vehicle at a speed of more than 20 miles per hour, (iii) is incapable of further increasing the speed of the device when human power alone is used to propel the vehicle at a speed of more than 20 miles per hour, and (iv) disengages or ceases to function when the vehicle’s brakes are applied.”

A valid driver’s license or a motorized bicycle permit is required to operate a motorized or electric-assisted bicycle. Operators under the age of 16 with a motorized bicycle permit may not have any passengers (except a parent or guardian if the bicycle is equipped for a passenger), may not operate the bicycle at night, may not operate the bicycle on an interstate highway, and must wear a helmet.

Motorized bicycles and electric-assisted bicycles having the following equipment requirements: headlights on at all times, taillight, at least one rear view mirror, permanent seat, horn, brake, and directional signals (if operated at night). Eye protection is required for the use of the motorized bicycle only. Helmets are required for anyone under the age of 18 on a motorized bicycle. Helmets are required for every operator of an electric-assisted bicycle regardless of age.

A motorized bicycle requires liability insurance; however, electric-assisted bicycles do not require insurance. All traffic laws need to be followed and motorized bicycles must be operated as close to the right edge of the roadway as possible. This information, including a picture example of the bicycle, is also located on the police department’s Web site under patrol safety bulletins.

**OFFICER SEAN COOPER #7134**  
*Owatonna Police Department*