

EBTC's E-Bike Policy and Rationale

FYI: The Board communicates any changes to members via the Newsletter.

Rationale for 'Pedal-Assist Only' E-Bike Policy (below)

Safety during a group ride is best assured if the bicycles used perform in a similar manner. 'Pedal-assist' e-bikes perform more similarly to 'pedal-only' bikes than do 'throttle e-bikes'. This is because power assistance only engages when the bicycle is being pedalled, and a safety mechanism prevents any power before a speed of 3 km/hr is attained.

In contrast, e-bikes with a handlebar throttle allow more rapid acceleration from a stop, on the flat and passing up hills. While throttle e-bikes can be useful in some cycling situations, they can pose a risk in group riding with a mix of bikes.

The Board recognizes that how a rider performs, whether on an e-bike or a pedal-only bike, is also important for the safety of a group of riders. However, by restricting the type of e-bike, we aim to reduce the risk if of an incident/accident, as well as the issues our volunteer Ride Leaders have to address on Club rides.

To develop EBTC's e-bike policy below, the Board consulted other 'recreational' cycling clubs, reviewed regulations in place in Alberta, including in National Parks, and did internet research on e-bikes.

Policy Manual: First adopted in 2022, the policy was updated in January 2024 to make clear that 'handlebar throttles' are not allowed, and to add the two final paragraphs about riding in a group, as shown below.

'Pedal assist' E-bikes are generally permitted on EBTC rides if they have the following characteristics:

- can be propelled by the rider's muscular power alone;
- cease power assistance immediately when the rider stops pedaling. **No** other type of speed control such as handlebar throttles are allowed.
- have a total power output of 500 watts or less
- have a power assist limit of 32 km/hour on level ground
- have a safety mechanism preventing the motor from being engaged before the bike reaches a 3 km/hour speed (i.e., no fast acceleration).

If E-bikes are **not** considered appropriate for a particular ride (e.g., hill training), the Ride Leader will state this in the ride description.

EBTC members who are new to E-bike riding are strongly advised to become proficient in the use of their bike before joining a group ride with the Club. Ways to gain proficiency include taking a course, riding on both flat and on hilly terrain, and riding in rural and urban settings with various types of intersections.

When riding with EBTC, E-bike riders should anticipate and control any speed surges so as not to impact others in the group. If it is necessary to pass another rider - particularly on hills where most riders to lose speed - this should be clearly communicated, i.e., "passing on your left."