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Safe Riding Considerations for E-bike Riders

Defensive Riding Skills for Electric Bike Riders by Jace Hobbs

We are fueled by the sun with our lithium powered steeds. We ride fast, even uphill! We are the new wave of E-bike riders that the roadways have never seen before.

We have to accept that we are going to confuse drivers a bit as they get used to electric bike riders going so much faster than they are used to seeing from push bikes.

It reminds me of my Alaska off-road riding experiences. The real danger was grizzly bears but not for the reason I expected. When riding your bike in grizzly country, the bear can't tell that you are a creature, because it does not recognize a bike and cyclist in its finely honed predator memory list. So it can lead to some very close encounters before the bear recognises you as a human or as anything at all. In the wrong situation, like coming around a blind curve, the bear can get spooked with disastrous results. It's not the bear's fault, and the usual solution is to ring a bell as you round the corners; works like a charm.

Ebike riding is similar in that the motorist does not recognize the new breed of cyclist out there taking the lane at 35 kph and climbing hills at 25. They are thinking 'push-bike' when the reaction we need them to think is 'moped'. We have to have sympathy with the motorist who makes wrong assumptions on their overtaking speed based on past experience with much slower bikes. Even pedestrians crossing the streets may misjudge the speed we are approaching.

It is definitely frustrating when a motorist makes this kind of miscalculation but I have to say that they cannot necessarily be blamed. Until there are sizeable numbers of e-bikes on the road this misjudgment will continue to happen, so we have to anticipate it.

Electric bike riders need to drive defensively. We should never assume that a car driver will predict the exact timing of our movements. This safety consideration is not a daunting problem. Car drivers and cyclists, electric or otherwise, should all drive defensively. So do not be put off. Gradually there will be more electric bicycles on the roads and more driver awareness of a new commuter in the traffic mix. Electric Bike Hub is at the forefront of raising this awareness with many public lectures and press coverage throughout New Zealand being generated by the feats of our remarkable machines.

We electric bike riders also have safety benefits, like the reduced time we are on hills being overtaken by cars. I contend that on the whole, there are so many health and fiscal, and environmental benefits to e-bike riding that we are very smart to make the transition to electric transportation.

We electric bike riders are the new species in the forest and the motorist needs to recognize us as the speedy equals that we are. Fortunately, humans are a lot more adaptable than the grizzlies, but take a bit more caution.

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Did you know?

Electric cars are already 3 times more efficient than petrol driven cars, and the gap is widening.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Spring is Sprung!*
- *Mayors get in the saddle of an e-bike.*
- *Cargo ebikes making a splash in NZ*
- *E-bike Defensive Driving*

Over-amped E-bikes; Why they Endanger Us All

Jace Hobbs

E-bikers in New Zealand have it good. The far-thinking transport ministry has given a lot of latitude in the definition of a bicycle and we e-bikers ride on powerful and swift little motorcycles, legally. The legal limit of electric assist that makes a bike still a bike, and not a moped is 300 watt average motor draw. Within that power range, e-bikes don't get registered and inspected, and don't pay road fees for their usage. E-bikes get an incentive to prosper their owners with a remarkable economy of operation, assuming they play by the rules.

Unfortunately that wattage limit is regularly exceeded by people that abuse the NZ regulation and ride far more powerful bikes than allowed by law. The various rationales they use for the illegality is that 1. No one will know and the police don't check. 2. They are experienced riders and can handle the high speeds attained. 3. They aren't hurting anyone by their high speed riding. I think all of these excuses are false and I will explore each one with you now, hoping you will agree to stay legal on your e-bike.

That the police don't check is somewhat true. The police will check when there's an accident and especially when there is a collision with another person, but seldom otherwise. What we need to remember is that no matter what the bike looks like, if an over-amped bike is used on our roads or bike lanes, it is an unregistered

moped, full stop. If someone gets hurt by that rider, it is a serious criminal offence, and well it should be. Endangering the public for short sighted economy should get the harshest treatment, and no doubt that is what the courts will deliver.

What these foolish few don't realize is they also imperil the whole electric bike industry by giving e-bikes an association with reckless behavior and criminality. They may spoil the utility of all of us riding legal bikes in an instant of inattention. Their brake systems and converted bike frames were never meant for such speeds, and the danger is inherent. The laws can change against us, and these boy-racer types may be the undoing of a needed transportation option. I am working against that tragedy.

Secondly, these riders overestimate their ability to be safe. At speed, almost any incident with another vehicle or pedestrian leads to serious injury. The pedestrian will not be at fault here. They have a right to expect that bicycles are traveling at moderate speeds on the bike and shared usage trails. The bikes must be capable of the power driving them, and that is clearly not the case for too

many of the illegal machines owned by the irresponsible. Speed stacks the odds against such behavior.

Lastly, they are endangering anyone exposed to their extreme momentum, and to endanger someone is to transgress upon them. Where there is danger, eventually there will be injury. Stay with the legal limit and we will all be secure in our remarkable transportation advantage; the e-bike.



In the Ebike news- Welly mayoral ride, the electric Yuba in NZ and more.

Mayor Celia Wade-Brown rode the wild side of Wellington with Jace Hobbs this month on an eZee electric cargo bike. Celia is an ardent cycle advocate, so jumping on an electric was not a problem for her, but she could not stop gushing about it when she got off the bike at Oriental Parade.

She kept thinking that she could get more time and productivity in her day with an ebike. "I could save 30 minutes a day of my commuting time and arrive looking a bit less red and steamy and a bit more mayoral."

Her 5 minutes that she had allocated for the press interview generously stretched out to half an hour because of her enthusiasm. Even after going into her luncheon, she brought out the French ambassador to ride on this remarkable bike.

Electric cargo bikes arrive in New Zealand. While relatively new to the world, they were just re-invented by eZee with the introduction of the Yuba/eZee electric cargo bikes.

They are making waves in ultra efficient delivery and light commercial activities. They are light commercial because they are light compared to even the lightest moped, and they are light on resource utilization.

If commuter costs and delivery costs are being significantly reduced by small business, just think what they can do for households that can let go of one car and replace it with a zero-emission, almost free-fuel vehicle that never pays a parking fee and can get the shopping home just as fast as the old petrol guzzler.

It's a game-changing product and technology.

Palmerston North council changes its fleet to ride on the eZee electric bikes for intra-city deliveries. Tom

Croskery, sustainability director for the council selected from a series of offers to chose the eZee Sprints as the best bike for the institutional requirement.

Sprints were chosen for their durability and for the internal rear Nexus shifter that is an easily learned shifting system as well as shifting from a standstill. The Sprints are ideal for such activities as they are perhaps the easiest electric bikes to adapt to various rider styles and with the eZee rack is stronger than any other e-bike on the NZ market. They are well within the durability needed to carry the loads that are anticipated in the Council's plans.

The eZee line is seen as the institutional bike of choice because of the overall robust construction and good

Your Carbon Toeprint; What it Could Look Like.

Your 'Carbon Toeprint'©; What it Could Look Like.

We hear lots about our carbon footprint, how big it is and the ramifications of our petrochemical lifestyle on future generations. How easy is it to reduce your greenhouse gas emission in any real way; one that does not have you living in a tent? The answer may surprise you. The electric bike is a giant stride towards your carbon footprint becoming a carbon toeprint, a phrase I have coined to describe a new type of lifestyle..

"The electric bike is a giant stride towards your carbon footprint becoming a carbon toeprint."

The biggest hurdle with our personal carbon emissions is our cars and transport. The internal combustion engine really is wasteful, always has been and will be no matter what gizmos they affix to the engine. It's inherently wasteful. The technology of cars is industrial revolution stuff that we have just learned to manufacture really well, but not cleanly.

We are on the cusp of changing our transportation to non-fossil fuel alternatives, primarily electric. Electric motors are very powerful.

What runs the locomotives? What runs the new largest ships in the world? The answer is electric motors; torque abundant, efficient electric motors. What runs the most efficient vehicles in the world? The

answer once again is electric motors. The source of the electricity varies, and new technologies are coming along to produce it from all manner of sources, but the product of infinite adaptability, electricity, is always the same.

One choice that can take you to the head of the class with your carbon toeprint is an electric bike. The fuel, electricity, is so cheap as to make it inconsequential in the cost of operation. Electric bikes are so reliable that cross continent voy-

ages are routinely being done by pioneers in a new type of travel. I'm not saying we should cross continents on our electric bikes, though we could. My point is we can, now, today, with great reliability and a modicum of comfort, commute on the ultra-efficient, responsible-to-future-generations, transportation option of today: the electric bike.

Electric bikes are nothing new, quite the contrary, but the battery technology that makes them a practical alternative to our gas guzzling cars is new. The lithium batteries on the best bikes today are nothing less than a revelation. They are light, durable, energy dense and charge for thousands of charges.

The carbon toeprint lifestyle can entirely embrace the electric bike. They are almost certainly the most efficient motor vehicle on the road. Perhaps they are the right fit for your lifestyle.

EZOOMERS NZ
NEWS AND VIEWS
ON EBIKES

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that would like to get it.
To include or exclude yourself from the next issue,
just email us with your wish.

*Your next bike could
be an ebike*



*We encourage submissions about Ebikes and issues surrounding Ebikes for publication
in subsequent issues of EZoomers. Simply drop an email to Jace Hobbs at the return
address and your ideas or article may well find its way to the many who want opinion
and information about Ebikes in NZ.*

The Life Altering Technology of Lithium Polymer Batteries Powering Electric Bikes

The Care and Feeding of your eZee Electric Bike Lithium Polymer Battery.

You are the new owner of a 21st century transportation marvel: your eZee bike battery. Understanding how to charge and care for the lithium polymer battery is easy, but it will help you have a long and happy life of battery use. This sheet will help you get the most from your purchase.

The technology of your eZee lithium today. Your eZee battery is a remarkable piece of technology. It will take you quite far, and it will take you with nearly full power until it is completely depleted. It works like a gas tank would and runs just as fast until empty. When it is

nearly depleted, the power will fall off rapidly, and your bike will be just a push bike again. The good news is how far you got on so little electricity.

Older technology batteries had memory issues, meaning that small charges diminished their ability to hold a charge. Your new battery does

not suffer from this problem. The best maintenance for the lithium technology is to keep these batteries fully charged.

Whatever you remember about taking care of your rechargeable batteries in the past, today there is a very simple formula for getting maximum utility out of your ebike battery. It's this simple; plug it in as often as you use it, and keep it fully charged for best longevity. Preferably, charge it every day at the end of your ride. One of the advantages of this is that when you jump on your bike, the battery will always be ready to go, and it's easy to achieve this.

Specifics about Charging.

It's simple really. The battery can be charged in the bike or lifted out of the bike. Connect the charger into the battery and plug the charger into the wall and THEN turn the charger on. In other words, connect everything up before turning on the power. This is so the battery management system will read the needs of the battery properly. Nothing will be harmed by doing this poorly, but the battery may not charge completely (or at all) if the charger is switched on when plugging it into the battery. That's all you have

to know and do, as the charger will top up the charge and turn itself off automatically. Now you know everything you need to know to go e-biking, well almost everything. Go well.

Storage of your battery. If you do not use your battery for months on end, give it a top up charge for one hour every three months.