

Bicycle Association of Great Britain  
[www.bicycleassociation.org.uk](http://www.bicycleassociation.org.uk)

The Motorcycle Industry Association  
[www.mcia.co.uk](http://www.mcia.co.uk)

## Press release: 17 May 2017 (for immediate release) Off-road electric bikes – nothing has changed

The Bicycle Association of Great Britain (BA) and The Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA) are concerned that consumers and suppliers may be confused by a recent “Whitepaper” summary of European regulations<sup>1</sup>, and associated article<sup>2</sup>, recently published by the cycle trade publication Bike Europe.

This notes that electric bikes intended for off-road use can avoid the requirement to be type approved before sale, even if they fall outside the strict limits on continuous rated power (250 W) and motor cut-out speed (25 km/h) for an electric bike in the UK to be treated in law as a bicycle, not a motorbike.

**This is not the full story for UK consumers and suppliers. There are in fact additional strict regulations which mean that to enjoy the same off-road access and status as a normal bicycle<sup>3</sup>, an electric-assist mountain bike absolutely must be within the 250 W power and 25 km/h cut-off limits.**

As well as the EU type approval regulations which Bike Europe has summarised (which apply to the sale of new bikes), there are also strict national regulations which control the legal use of motor vehicles. In the UK, only electric bikes with power assist rating of 250 W or less, cutting out at or below 25 km/h, are treated in national law<sup>4</sup> as “not motor vehicles”.

**For any electric bike which does not meet these limits, UK motor vehicle regulations apply.** These include requirements for registration (for which type approval is required), tax, insurance, driving licence and the need to wear a motorcycle helmet. These apply to any vehicle intended to be used “on the public highway”, which includes tracks, bridleways, paths and common land, both on or off road.

It is only vehicles which are only ever intended to be used away from the public highway (i.e. exclusively on private land not open to the public, with the landowner’s permission) which are not subject to type approval before they can legally be used in the UK, if they exceed the 250 W and 25 km/h limits. Such vehicles must still comply with CE marking requirements, which includes compliance with the Machinery Directive. But these vehicles cannot legally be used at all on the public highway (roads, tracks, on common land or cycle paths, be they on or off road).

### In summary:

- **Nothing has changed. To be used legally in the UK wherever bicycles may be used, electric mountain bikes must absolutely stick to the well established 250 W power and 25 km/h cut-off speed limits.**
- **Any electric mountain bike with power over 250 W and/or cut-off speed above 25 km/h is a motorbike in UK law, requiring registration and type approval for legal use on the public highway (only where it is legal to drive motorbikes, of course). The “public highway” covers both on-road and off-road riding, wherever the public have access.**

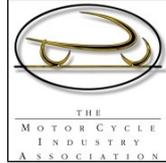
ENDS

<sup>1</sup> Bike Europe Whitepaper: <http://www.bike-eu.com/whitepapers>

<sup>2</sup> Article: <http://www.bike-eu.com/laws-regulations/nieuws/2017/5/new-whitepaper-e-mtbs-excluded-from-type-approval-10129996#>

<sup>3</sup> Except that the rider must be 14 or over, and there are some other minor restrictions: see <https://www.gov.uk/electric-bike-rules>

<sup>4</sup> Principally, the Road Traffic Act 1988 Provision 189: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/52/section/189> and Statutory Instrument No. 25 2015: [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/2742/pdfs/uksi\\_20022742\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/2742/pdfs/uksi_20022742_en.pdf)



**Bicycle Association of Great Britain**  
[www.bicycleassociation.org.uk](http://www.bicycleassociation.org.uk)

**The Motorcycle Industry Association**  
[www.mcia.co.uk](http://www.mcia.co.uk)

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

Bicycle Association press contact: Steve Garidis 0790 026 4820 [steve@bicycleassociation.org.uk](mailto:steve@bicycleassociation.org.uk)  
Bicycle Association technical contact: Peter Eland 0700 349 7476 [peter@bicycleassociation.org.uk](mailto:peter@bicycleassociation.org.uk)  
Bicycle Association website: [www.bicycleassociation.org.uk](http://www.bicycleassociation.org.uk)

MCIA press contact: Stevie Muir 07989 378597 [Press@mcia.co.uk](mailto:Press@mcia.co.uk)  
MCIA website: [www.mcia.co.uk](http://www.mcia.co.uk)

A previous "No Grey Areas" BA/MCIA joint press release covered electric bike regulations in detail:  
<http://tinyurl.com/guy4kyr>

The most recent guidance from the Department for Transport on electric bikes is available at:  
<http://tinyurl.com/zxvka5p>

**ENDS ALL**