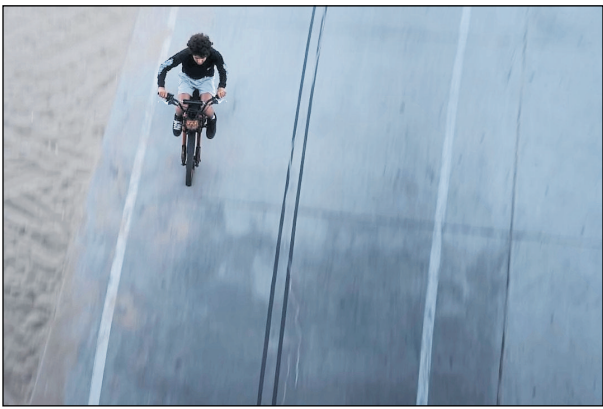




Jae C. Hong/AP Photo

A boy rides an e-bike in Santa Monica, Calif. on Monday.

Should Parents Be Liable for Kids’ E-Bike Crashes?

BY PHILIP MARCELO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP) — As traumatic injuries and deaths surge among children involved in crashes on e-bikes and other electrified vehicles, one California prosecutor is cracking down by pursuing criminal charges against some of the young riders' parents.

It is just one way officials across the country are trying to tackle the growing issue, while families navigate a patchwork of local laws and guidance on what kind of souped-up cycles and scooters are safe or even legal for their kids to ride.

New York City’s mayor recently sent cease-and-desist notices to dozens of online retailers for selling products marketed as “e-bikes” that aren’t street legal after a 17-year-old died in a crash on an illicit vehicle. In neighboring New Jersey, new regulations require e-bike riders to be at least 15 and obtain a license and vehicle registration.

But do the measures hit the mark? Cycling advocates worry regulations might be too broad — demonizing low-powered e-bikes instead of speedier motos — while some parents question whether localized, piecemeal strategies are enough.

Monica Stafford, a San Francisco-area mother whose teen daughter fractured her skull falling off an e-bike, said officials are “missing the mark” if they’re seeking to lay the blame solely on parents. The San Rafael resident said a unified, national set of rules is needed.

“We’re in a total Wild West of laws,” Stafford said. “Being for common sense laws doesn’t mean that you’re against e-bikes, just like you can be for cars but not think that it’s safe to put keys in the hands of a 10-year-old.”

E-BIKE INJURIES DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACT CHILDREN, EXPERTS SAY

The two-wheeled machines have become nearly ubiquitous in recent years, from packs of teens zipping around California beach towns to the army of delivery drivers dodging traffic on the congested streets of Manhattan.

Hospital visits for injuries from e-bike, e-scooter and other motorized rides have, as expected, soared as they have grown in popularity, study after study has shown. But researchers stress that the more concerning trends are the severity of the injuries and the fact that they’re especially pronounced among children.

“The big takeaway is that people are generally more severely injured

than they would be if they were on a traditional, pedal bicycle,” said Dr. John Austin, a doctor at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine who led a recently published statewide study. “Overall, these patients tend to be younger, they tend to be unhelmeted and, in turn, be more severely injured.”

RECENT YOUTH DEATHS PROMPT OFFICIALS TO TAKE ACTION

Most e-bikes are classified as nonmotorized vehicles akin to traditional bicycles under federal law, meaning riders don’t need a license, insurance or to even wear a helmet. Most states, though, have enacted additional requirements for higher powered machines, including minimum age and helmet requirements.

In New York City, the death of the 17-year-old just steps from City Hall has spurred renewed debate about the bikes. Gabriel Nacato had been riding a vehicle advertised as an “e-bike” but wasn’t legal on city streets.

Earlier this month, Mayor Zohran Mamdani warned more than 40 online retailers, including Amazon, Walmart and Target, that they could face fines of up to \$2,000 for each sale of an e-bike that exceeds city regulations.

New York state requires riders of all forms of e-bikes to be at least 16, and New York City imposes additional restrictions, including a 15 mph (24 kph) speed limit. California, in contrast, has no statewide minimum age for lower-powered bikes, though riders must be at least 16 to use e-bikes that can go up to 28 mph (45 kph).

New Jersey and Illinois are among the states that have enacted statewide regulations recently, and Massachusetts is weighing measures. Meanwhile, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in June vetoed a 10 mph (16 kph) speed limit and other e-bike regulations, saying the measures would lead to “enhanced surveillance” of citizens.

OTHER JURISDICTIONS SEEK TO HOLD PARENTS ACCOUNTABLE

In Southern California, Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer says his office has more than two dozen open investigations against parents after launching a new unit focused on e-bike and e-motorcycle cases involving children.

The office has already brought charges against four, including the mother of a 14-year-old

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LEGAL NOTICE

THE FOLLOWING PERSONS HAVE QUALIFIED AS PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE BELOW LISTED ESTATES DURING THE MONTH OFF JULY 2026. ANYONE HAVING CLAIM AGAINST THESE ESTATES SHOULD PRESENT THE SAME, ACCORDING TO LAW, WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THE DATE OF APPOINTMENT OF EACH PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE.

Estate	Representative	Attorney	Date Qualified
RICHARD CARLETON GREEN HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00271	DEBORAH S. MCCARTY ADMINISTRATRIX 2037 ENGLEWOOD DR’ APEX, NC 27539-8341	JACK N. LACKEY JR PO BOX 1065 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42241-1065	7/6/2026
JACK GARNER CRAWFORD HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00269	VELMA CRAWFORD EXECUTRIX 800 BLUEBIRD CT HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	NONE	7/6/2026
RANDAHL EUGENE JONES HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00267	BLAKE JONES CO-EXECUTOR 501 WASHINGTON ST PETERSBURG, PA 16669 BLAIR ARNOLD CO-EXECUTOR 618 DEEPWOOD DR HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	DUNCAN CAVANAH PO BOX 648 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	7/6/2026
GARY W. MYERS SR HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00263	MITCHELL RAY MYERS EECUTOR 776 MILL ST HANSON, KY 42413	NONE	7/6/2026
ELAINE COXE OAK GROVE, KY 26-P-00259	SHAWN MUSICK ADMINISTRATOR SHAWN MUSICK 42 IDLEWILD SPUR OAK GROVE, KY 42262	J. MICHAEL FOSTER PO BOX 24 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42241-0024	7/6/2026
MARY FAYE JOURDAN HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00268	DARLA BREWER EXECUTRIX 932 ADAMS AVE HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	J. MICHAEL FOSTER PO BOX 24 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42241-0024	7/13/2026
ALEX SUTTON JR. HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00274	GREGORY SUTTON EXECUTOR 1501 SHAWNEE DR HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	NONE	7/13/2026
WALTER CULLEN WALLS HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00276	FAITHLYN WALLS ADMINISTRATRIX 901 E. HIGHPOINT DR HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	JASON E. HOLLAND 905 S MAIN STREET HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	7/13/2026
DICKIE R. REECE LAFAYETTE, KY 26-P-00278	NANCY A. REEC EXECUTRIX 230 OLD CLARKSVILLE PIKE LAFAYETTE, KY 42254	STEPHEN E. UNDERWOOD PO BOX 99 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42241	7/13/2026
DAISY JUNE SPARKMAN HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00290	BOBBY RAY MARLOWE EXECUTOR 206 RONEY DR HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	NONE	7/16/2026
MARGIE BELL HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00277	ASHLEY BUSSELL ADMINISTRATRIX 195 PLYE LANE HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	NONE	7/20/2026
HAROLD DEAN LOONEY HERNDON, KY 26-P-00279	PEGGY LOONEY EXECUTRIX 551 SIMMONS CEMETARY RD HERNDON, KY 42236	NONE	7/20/2026
KENNETH A HANCOCK HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00281	SANDRA HANCOCK EXECUTRIX 6075 COX MILL RD HOPKINSVILLE KY 42240	ROBERT E ISON PO BOX 648 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42241	7/20/2026
TEDDY M. PHILLIPS HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00285	JAMES D. JACKSON ADMINISTRATOR PO BOX 144 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	NONE	7/20/2026
ELMER L. ROBERTS CERULEAN, KY 26-P-00289	WILDA H. ROBERTS EXECUTRIX 9329 PRINCETON RD CERULEAN, KY 42215	DAVID L. COTTHOFF PO BOX 536 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42241	7/20/2026
JOE DARRELL FARRIS HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00293	BRENDA FARRIS ADMINISTRATRIX 7810 OLD MADISONVILLE RD HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	NONE	7/20/2026
MICHAEL TODD JOHNSON OAK GROVE, KY 26-P-00294	LEZLEE MONROE ADMINISTRATRIX 286 E 2200 S CLEARFIELD, UT 84015	CARRIE D. RITSERT 209 OLD HARRODS CREEK RD #100 LOUISVILLE, Y 40223	7/21/2026
JOSEPH BRYAN MOORIS JR HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00296	ASHLEY CALHOUN 115A HOLLY ST HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	NONE	7/22/2026
ROBERT LEWIS ROGERS HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00295	JAMES STRATTON ROGERS EXECUTOR 220 BROWNING PLACE HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	NONE	7/23/2026
SILAS EDWARD TAYLOR HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00301	STACY TAYLOR ADMINISTRATRIX 2733 NORTH POWER RD, 102-107 MESA, AZ 85215	H. DOUGLAS WILLEN PO BOX 536 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42241-0536	7/24/2026
RICHARD BYRON BARNETT CROFTON, KY 26-P-00266	SHERRY HEWELL EXECUTRIX 7840 RUCKER #1 RD EAST HERNDERSON, KY 42420	NONE	7/27/2026
THOMAS H BERMAN RUSSELLVILLE, KY 26-P-00292	TOMMY BERMAN ADMINISTRATOR 4324 MONKEY NORMAN RD HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	J MICHAEL FOSTER PO BOX 24 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42241-024	7/27/2026
STEVEN LEWIS DUNNING HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00298	JULIE DUNNING EXECUTRIX 8200 ANTIOCH RD HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	J MICHAEL FOSTER PO BOX 24 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42241-024	7/27/2026
VICKI JEAN BLAKE HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00305	CHRISTY BLAKE ADAMS ADMINISTRATRIX 923 SPRINGMONT DR HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	NONE	7/29/2026
GENE C. JOHNSON HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00307	MARY FITZGERALD ADMINISTRATRIX 316 PEARL ST OWENSBORO, KY 42303	NONE	7/29/2026
DELIAH J. GREGORY HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00310	JOYCE A. JOYCE EXECUTRIX 532 JUSTIFY DR HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240	NONE	7/29/2026
TERRY WAYNE JONES HOPKINSVILLE, KY 26-P-00309	RUTH A EATON EXECUTRIX 233 JESEPH COURT MARYVILLE, TN 37803	DUNCAN CAVANAH PO BOX 648 HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42241	7/29/2026

PAIGE PARKER, CLERK, CHRISTIAN DISTRICT & CIRCUIT COURTS