



## **CHATHAM COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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### ***NEWS RELEASE***

For Immediate Release

August 18, 2026

#### **Chatham County Police Department Citing Parents and Minors for Illegal Operation of Motorized Cycles**

**Chatham County, GA (August 18, 2026)** – The Chatham County Police Department is now citing parents who allow their children to operate motorized cycles in violation of state law, and in some cases, the juveniles themselves.

“Like many communities, we have seen a huge increase in the number of young minors illegally operating motorized cycles with no regard for their own safety or traffic laws,” said Chatham County Police Chief Jeff Hadley. “After months of educating and encouraging parents to understand the laws surrounding these vehicles, we’re still inundated with complaints about young riders who endanger themselves and others on major roadways, and in neighborhoods and parks. We now feel we have no choice but ticket parents who are allowing this kind of behavior. And, in some cases, the juvenile cycle operators, as well.”

The Chatham County Police Department recently cited several parents after their minor children were found illegally operating motorized cycles in Chatham County’s Eastside Precinct. The state law makes it illegal for anyone to allow an unlicensed person under the age of 18 to operate a motorized vehicle. The charge is a misdemeanor traffic citation, with fines and penalties determined by the courts.

“Any parent who purchases a motorized cycle for their child has the responsibility to make sure that their child can legally operate it under state law,” continued Hadley. “Unlicensed drivers in Georgia can only operate traditional bicycles or E-bicycles. Parents need to make sure that their child is not operating a motorized cycle that would be considered a dirt bike, moped, or motorcycle if they do not have a Georgia driver’s license.”

The Chatham County Police Department has also cited juveniles on motorized cycles for traffic offenses including

Some parents may believe that they are purchasing a popular E-bike for their child when, in fact, they are giving the child a vehicle that is classified as a motorized vehicle like a moped or

motorcycle. Only cycles that have less than 750 watts of power are considered E-bikes in Georgia. Anything else requires a valid Georgia driver's license, vehicle registration, and insurance.

Under Georgia state law, E-bikes fall into three categories:

**Class One (Pedal Assist):** Motor assistance only while pedaling; stops at 20 mph. No throttle and fully operational pedals are required. There is not minimum age to operate, and they are allowed on roads, bike lanes, and most bike paths (unless otherwise noted).

**Class Two (Throttle-Assisted):** Motor assistance up to 20 mph with or without pedaling. Throttle allowed, and fully operational pedals are required. There is no minimum age to operate, and they are allowed on roads, bike lanes, and most bike paths (unless otherwise noted).

**Class Three:** Pedal-assist only, and motor assistance stops at 28 mph. Must be 15 years-old or older to operate, and a helmet is required for all riders and passengers. Can be operated on roads and bike lanes but are restricted on many bike paths.

All bicycle safety laws apply to E-bicycles, and parents are encouraged to make sure their children know the rules before allowing them to ride.

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