

Surrey Police to crack down on illegal e-scooters

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Surrey Police has launched a county-wide crackdown on illegal e-bikes and e-scooters, with seized machines set to be destroyed under a tougher enforcement policy from next month.

The new operation, called Operation Scramble, will see roads policing officers working alongside local Safer Neighbourhood Teams to stop riders suspected of using illegal or dangerously modified machines, or riding in an antisocial or reckless manner.

Police say they have already seized 136 e-bikes and e-scooters in Surrey during 2026, compared with 127 during the whole of last year.

Where the age of riders has been established, Surrey Police says 36 per cent have been children or teenagers.

Chief Superintendent Graham Barnett, head of Surrey and Sussex Police's operations and protective security command, said illegal use had become a growing problem.

"The illegal use of e-bikes and e-scooters is a growing problem in Surrey, and we will tirelessly pursue riders who are causing fear and nuisance in our county," he said.

"Many of the reports of illegal e-bikes relate to criminal activity."

He added that the force would combine enforcement with education, particularly because of the number of younger riders involved.

From next month Surrey Police says its policy will be for illegal e-bikes and e-scooters seized by officers to be sent for destruction.

The distinction between an ordinary legal e-bike and an illegal machine can sometimes be misunderstood.

A road-legal electrically assisted pedal cycle, or EAPC, must have pedals capable of propelling it, an electric motor with a maximum continuous rated output of no more than 250 watts and electrical assistance which cuts out once the bicycle reaches 15.5mph.

Riders must be at least 14 years old. A compliant EAPC can be used without a driving licence, vehicle registration, road tax or motor insurance and is generally treated in law in the same way as an ordinary bicycle.

However, a machine capable of being powered electrically beyond 15.5mph, or fitted with a motor exceeding the permitted continuous rating, does not qualify simply because it looks like a bicycle.

It is instead treated as a motor vehicle and, for lawful road use, would need the appropriate registration, insurance and driving licence requirements to be met. An approved motorcycle helmet may also be required.

The Government considered increasing the normal e-bike power limit from 250 watts to 500 watts in 2024, together with relaxing rules governing throttle-controlled "twist and go" bikes. The proposals were abandoned in January 2025 after most of the main stakeholder organisations responding to the consultation opposed them and the Department for Transport concluded there was insufficient evidence to justify the change. The 250-watt limit therefore remains.

The position for privately owned e-scooters is more restrictive.

They are legally classed as motor vehicles and cannot ordinarily be used on public roads, pavements or other public places. Special regulations allow e-scooters hired as part of authorised Government trials to be used in participating areas, but there is no such rental trial operating in Surrey.

Official casualty figures suggest the issue is not confined to nuisance complaints.

Department for Transport statistics published in July show there were 1,377 reported collisions involving e-scooters in Great Britain during 2025, resulting in 1,477 casualties. Ten people were killed, all of them e-scooter riders, while an estimated 484 people were seriously injured.

Thirteen casualties from e-scooter collisions were recorded within the Surrey Police area during 2025.

Surrey Police says that since October 2025 there have also been two collisions resulting in serious injury in the county involving e-scooters and three road traffic collisions involving e-bikes.

Concern about illegal powered bikes and scooters has already featured in local policing priorities elsewhere in Surrey.

Earlier this month Surrey Police identified illegal use of e-scooters and bikes around Frimley Green Recreation Ground as an antisocial behaviour priority, saying officers could use powers including vehicle seizure as well as traffic offence reports.

There is a separate safety concern surrounding poorly manufactured or modified electric bikes.

In March 2025 Surrey County Council reported that an unsafe battery fitted to a converted e-bike had caused a fire at a Surrey home while being charged. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and Trading Standards subsequently secured the removal of the particular battery from sale on Amazon.

Government safety advice warns that counterfeit, damaged or badly modified batteries and incompatible chargers can increase the risk of lithium-ion battery fires.

Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner Lisa Townsend said complaints about e-bikes and e-scooters had repeatedly been raised during her office's Policing Your Community roadshow over the summer.

"They told us loud and clear they have had enough and we have listened to those concerns," she said.

"The result is this operation which aims to crackdown on illegal riding and take these often-dangerous machines off our streets for good. We know that their use can often be linked to wider criminal activity and the message is clear - we want to make Surrey an illegal e-bike and e-scooter free county."

Chief Superintendent Barnett said: "From next month our policy is clear: all illegal e-bikes and e-scooters we seize will be sent for destruction.

"I hope this provides direct reassurance to Surrey residents that we are listening to your concerns around illegal and reckless riding and taking decisive action."

Sam Jones - Reporter



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- Back to Westminster with local priorities in focus - 18 September 2026. Helen Maguire MP said she would host a roundtable of police chiefs to press for clearer Government guidance on e-scooters. [epsomandewelltimes.com](https://www.epsomandewelltimes.com)
- January crime and safety round-up - 4 June 2026. Surrey Police identified antisocial use of motorbikes and e-bikes as a local policing priority in Epsom and Ewell. [epsomandewelltimes.com](https://www.epsomandewelltimes.com)
- The New Year view from Westminster - 2 February 2026. Helen Maguire highlighted constituents' concerns about illegal and unsafe e-scooter use and called for a more coordinated response. [epsomandewelltimes.com](https://www.epsomandewelltimes.com)
- Surrey services get fire e-bike removed from Amazon - 13 March 2025. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and Trading Standards acted after an unsafe e-bike battery caused a house fire. [epsomandewelltimes.com](https://www.epsomandewelltimes.com)

Image: "idealised" e-bike and e-scooter in Epsom High Street (Google street view)