

## **Simon Cowell was Not Injured on an Electric Bicycle!**

Electric bikes are continuing to increase in popularity, and for good reason. They are fun to ride and have tremendous practical application for almost anyone's interest. It seems that virtually every day I see an ad promoting a new model of electric "bike." However, many of them are not bicycles as Florida defines them.

You may have heard about Simon Cowell's recent injury. Unfortunately, what you may have read in the press or heard from commentators that he was riding as an e-bike. Clearly, we were not present and have to rely upon press reports. From what I have been able to determine, Simon was actually riding an extremely fast electric motorcycle. News reports describe it as being capable of going from 0 to 50 mph in five seconds, faster than all but a few powerful cars. It was also described in other reports as having a top speed well in excess of 50 miles an hour. Clearly it was not a bicycle.

Apparently, Simon loves e-bikes. According to news accounts, he has at least four in London and uses them to commute to his office. He also has multiple e-bikes at his Los Angeles home. From what I've read, he was very familiar with his e-bikes and enjoys his toys. However, this bike was new to him and he was unfamiliar with its torque and power.

Simon is said to have been riding it in his courtyard. He apparently attempted a quick acceleration which caused the bike to do a wheelie, throwing him off onto his back. Sadly, he was pretty badly injured and required significant surgery. Given Simon's public persona, it was great to see how complementary he was of the medical personnel who helped him. He expressed deep appreciation. He also suggested that no one ride a new toy without reading the instruction manual. What a novel idea for most men.

The press reporting on his crash has been pretty sloppy about him being on an e-bike. Based on his notoriety, many of the reports focused on statistics about e-bike safety and questioning their use. From the early reporting, one would have clearly assumed Simon had been injured on an electric bicycle.

What exactly is an e-bike in Florida? Our recently enacted statute provides for three classes. Class I is pedal assisted with a top speed of 20 mph. Class II is throttle only up to 20 mph. Class III is pedal assisted with a top speed of 28 mph. The law also contains limitations on the size of the motors.

The definition of an e-bike is important to us for practical reasons. First, an e-bike is a bicycle and has all of the rights and privileges of a bicycle. Second, as a bicycle, the operator is not required to have a license, a registration or specific insurance for the bicycle. When you exceed the speed and power limitations as defined in the statute, an e-bike falls into the classification of some other type of vehicle which may have licensing, registration and insurance requirements with which you must comply.

*Jim Dodson is an experienced bicycle accident lawyer, cyclist and bicycle safety advocate who has been representing accident victims for over 25 years. Although his primary office is in Clearwater, he represents injury victims throughout Florida. He is the author of the [Florida Bicycle Accident Handbook](#) which answers the most commonly asked questions by injured cyclists. If you have questions about a Florida cycling accident this valuable resource is available to you absolutely free of charge at [www.jimdodsonlaw.com](http://www.jimdodsonlaw.com).*

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