

E-Scooter Safety Issues and Laws in Georgia Cities: A Preliminary Look

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Problem

Dockless scooters, or “e-scooters”, are an emerging mode of transportation that are gaining popularity, particularly in large urban environments. While these vehicles show potential for improving city-wide travel, there are safety concerns surrounding their use. A recent study by the Austin Public Health Department (2019) found that **of all injured riders in their survey, 48% sustained a head injury, and over a third sustained bone fractures** (excluding nose, fingers, and toes). A similar study by Trivedi, et al. (2019) found that 40% of injured riders in their survey sustained a head injury. Moreover, 4 e-scooter-related fatalities have occurred in Atlanta in 2019. These vehicles represent a unique challenge to policy makers for a variety of reasons:

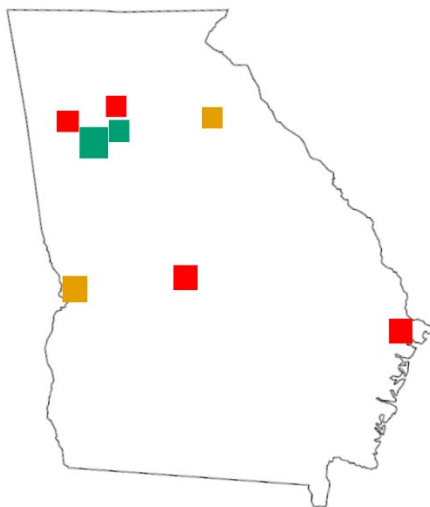


- **Lane designation:** E-scooter travel on roads have visibility and speed issues, which can lead to conflicts with motor vehicle traffic. Confining e-scooters to sidewalks creates similar conflicts with pedestrian traffic.
- **Safety enforcement:** The study performed by the Austin Public Health Department (2019) shows that less than one percent of individuals were wearing a helmet at the time of injury. While Atlanta holds e-scooter vendors responsible for requiring helmets during use, enforcement remains difficult.
- **Data collection:** E-scooters have been arriving on city streets largely within the last two years, so usage, crash, and injury data remain limited.

These issues make effective legislation difficult for city officials.

Response

The state of Georgia and its cities have responded to the recent trend in e-scooter use with a variety of legislative actions. Georgia State law requires that persons under the age of 16 wear a helmet while using an e-scooter.



- Alpharetta, GA: E-scooter use is banned on public right-of-ways and on public property (June 10, 2019)
- Marietta, GA: E-scooter use is banned on public right-of-ways and on public property (Feb. 13, 2019)
- Athens, GA: E-scooter use is banned for up to one year (Dec. 4, 2018)
- Decatur, GA: City law prohibits e-scooter use on sidewalks and between 9:00pm and 6:00 am
- Atlanta, GA: City law prohibits e-scooter use on sidewalks and between 9:00 pm and 4:00 am
- Macon, GA: E-scooter use is banned on public right-of-ways and on public property (Jan. 15, 2019)
- Columbus, GA: The city has placed a temporary moratorium on e-scooter permits pending a small test of e-scooter use within the city
- Savannah, GA: E-scooter use is banned on public right-of-ways and on public property (Sep. 13, 2018)

- May be ridden with conditions
- Temporarily banned pending further safety and regulatory evaluations
- Banned



References

- Austin Public Health and City of Austin, Dockless electric scooter-related injuries study: Austin, Texas. 2019.
- Trivedi, T. K., Liu, C., Antonio, A. L. M., Wheaton, N., Kreger, V., Yap, A., Elmore, J. G. (2019). Injuries Associated With Standing Electric Scooter Use. *JAMA Network Open*, 2(1), e187381–e187381. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2018.7381>



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