

E-Bike Safety Inquiry – Call for Evidence

ACT (Association of Cycle Traders) submission to APPGCW

The Association of Cycle Traders (ACT) represents the interests of over 4,000 UK-based specialist cycle retailers, workshops, and other bike businesses. The ACT plays a vital role in supporting the responsible growth of the cycling and e-mobility sectors.

As the retail voice of the UK cycle industry, we are committed to upholding the highest standards and safeguarding public confidence in e-bikes as a sustainable, low-emission transport solution. Our initiatives focus on education, risk reduction, and promoting safe retail and servicing practices across the UK.

The ACT manage Cytech, the world's largest training and accreditation scheme for bicycle mechanics, which incorporates a specialist e-bike course, with battery safety a part of the syllabus.

Background

Recent increases in media coverage of fires linked to unsafe e-bikes and chargers have understandably raised public concern. However, in the vast majority of cases, these incidents are not caused by certified, road-legal e-bikes from reputable UK retailers and manufacturers. Instead, the fires can be traced to:

- Uncertified batteries and chargers imported directly by consumers via unregulated online marketplaces
- Aftermarket conversion kits, often used to create unregulated and unsafe e-motorbikes
- Misuse of products, especially in the gig economy, where commercial riders frequently use illegal, modified, or non-road-legal e-bikes

This misconception is damaging the reputation of all e-bikes and threatening growth in a sector that offers substantial sustainability and health benefits to the UK population.

Industry initiatives

The reputable UK cycle industry has launched a number of initiatives to distinguish safe, compliant e-bikes from those that are illegal:

E-Bike Safety Register – created by the BA, a database of brands that meet stringent safety criteria and regulatory compliance.

E-Bike Positive Retailer Pledge – Developed and managed by the ACT in partnership with the BA, this pledge is now signed by approximately 400 cycle retailers across the UK, demonstrating their commitment to only selling, servicing, and advising on safe and legal e-bikes.

E-Bike Positive – created alongside other key e-bike cycle organisations. A consumer-facing initiative designed to promote safe purchasing behaviours and improve public understanding of how to identify legal, safe e-bikes and charging equipment.

We fully support and have liaised regularly with the Bicycle Association on its "Safeguarding E-Bikes by Stopping the Fires" document, which we understand has been submitted by the BA as part of this inquiry.

Insurance

Our insurance partner, Bikmo, has provided compelling data underscoring the rarity of fire incidents involving legal e-bikes with an incident rate of approx. 1 in 50,000 e-bikes per year. This data excludes illegal and commercial-use e-bikes, which represent the bulk of fire-related risk. Should further details be required on this aspect please let me know.

In addition, insurers are now increasingly differentiating between compliant and high-risk e-bikes:

- Some refuse to insure e-bikes altogether due to safety concerns.
- Others impose strict risk management conditions such as:
- Use of fireproof storage for batteries.
- Clearance from combustible materials.
- Prohibition of unattended charging.
- Requirement to use certified batteries and chargers from UK/EU suppliers.
- PAT testing and weekly charger inspections.
- Proper ventilation and placement of fire extinguishers.
- Safe battery disposal under the Batteries and Accumulators Regulations 2008.

Training

To reduce risk and promote responsible e-bike use in the gig economy, we recommend that battery safety training be made mandatory for all delivery riders using electric bikes. The ACT's Cytech training programme is well positioned to support this, offering practical, accessible training to help riders understand key areas such as safe battery use and storage, recognising quality standards, identifying reputable suppliers, and knowing where to seek professional advice. Equipping riders with this essential knowledge will help prevent unsafe practices, reduce fire risk, and support a safer, more sustainable delivery sector.

Furthermore, Cytech training has already delivered to a group from the Metropolitan Police, providing officers with the skills to identify non-compliant e-bikes and safely handle and store illegal or unsafe vehicles. We recommend extending this training nationwide to ensure all police forces are equipped with the knowledge and confidence to take effective enforcement action and support safer streets.

Summary

To address the root causes of e-bike fires and protect the public while allowing the legitimate industry to thrive, we urge the government to:

- Stop unsafe imports and regulate online marketplaces
- Impose clear regulations on the gig economy delivery sector, where illegal e-motorbikes (often misreported as e-bikes) are widely used. In parallel, introduce mandatory battery safety training for all riders, ensuring they understand how to identify legal e-bikes, purchase certified equipment, store and charge batteries safely, and avoid high-risk products
- Equip police with targeted education and greater enforcement powers to address the widespread use of illegal e-bikes. Clear guidance, training, and the legal authority to seize non-compliant vehicles are essential to help frontline officers distinguish between

legal e-bikes and dangerous, modified machines—improving public safety and supporting legitimate users and retailers

- Close legal loopholes allowing the sale of non-road-legal e-bikes and unregulated conversion kits to the general public