



SHARING THE ROAD WITH BICYCLES

Bicycles have the same rights and responsibilities on the streets that drivers do, and in most cases, they must share the lane. Bicycles are required to travel on the right hand side of the road with other traffic. Bicyclists are not allowed to travel facing traffic, since this is far less safe. They must ride as near to the right hand side of the road as practical, while avoiding

road hazards that could cause them to swerve into traffic. When you're sharing the road with bicycles, you should always expect the rider to make sudden moves. Trash, minor oil slicks, a pothole or crack in the concrete, a barking dog, a parked car or a car door opening, and other surprises can force a bicycle rider to swerve suddenly in front of you. Similarly, when cyclists are traveling past parked cars, they tend to move away from the cars, toward the center of the lane. This is to avoid injuring, or being injured by, persons getting out of those cars. In such cases, the bicyclist is operating the bicycle properly. If possible, give the cyclist the entire lane. When road conditions prevent this, pass the cyclist with extreme caution. Cyclists who are not on the extreme right hand side of the lane are not being careless, but are in fact attempting to account for traffic conditions and/or preparing to make a left turn. Bicycles are hard to see. The riders are exposed and easily injured in a collision. Oncoming bicycle traffic is often overlooked or its speed misjudged.

Safety Tips for Motor Vehicle Drivers:

- The most common causes of collisions are drivers turning left in front of an oncoming bicycle or turning right, across the path of the bicycle.
- Drivers often fail to pick the bicyclist out of the traffic scene, or inaccurately judge the speed of the cyclists making a left turn.
- Drivers overtaking a bicyclist, then making a right turn in front of the cyclist are also a cause of many accidents. Look once, then again, make sure you see the cyclist and know his speed before you turn.
- Merge with bicycle traffic when preparing for a right turn. Don't turn directly across the path of a bicyclist.
- Watch for bicycle riders turning in front of you without looking or signaling, especially if the rider is a child.
- Most bicyclists maintain eye contact with drivers of vehicles around them, particularly when the cyclist or vehicle is making a turn. Before turning, a driver should attempt to gain and maintain eye contact with the bicyclist to ensure a safer turn.
- Allow plenty of room when passing a bicycle rider.
- A driver should never attempt passing between a bicyclist and oncoming vehicles on a two-lane road. Slow down and allow vehicles to pass. Then move to the left to allow plenty of room to pass the rider safely. Leave at least three feet of space between your car and a cyclist when passing.

- Never pass a bicycle if the street is too narrow or you would force the bicyclist too close to parked vehicles. Wait until there is enough room to let you pass safely.
- If you are about to pass a bicycle on a narrow road and you think the rider doesn't know you're coming, tap your horn gently and briefly as a signal that you're going to pass. Don't blast your horn or otherwise startle or try to intimidate the rider.

Residential Areas Are Danger Zones

Bicyclists may ride in the middle of the street and disregard stop signs and traffic signals. Be careful in all neighborhood areas where children and teenagers might be riding.

- Children riding bicycles create special problems for drivers. Children are not capable of proper judgment in determining traffic conditions and drivers should be alert to the possibility of erratic movement and sudden changes in direction when children and bicycles are present.
- Watch out for bikes coming out from driveways or from behind parked cars or other obstructions.
- Bicyclists riding at night present visibility problems for drivers. At night, watch the side of the road for bicyclists. Bicyclists are required to have proper illumination, a front light and rear reflector, but drivers should be aware that bicyclists are not easily seen. Lights from approaching traffic may make them even harder to see at night.
- If you see a bicyclist with a red or orange pennant flag on an antennae attached to the bike, slow down; this is a common symbol to indicate the rider has impaired hearing.

Lane Positions for Bicycles

Bicycle riders are required to ride as far right in the lane as possible only when a car and a bicycle, side by side, can safely share the lane. Even then, there are certain times when a bicycle can take the full lane. A bicyclist should be allowed full use of the lane when:

- The rider is overtaking and passing another vehicle going in the same direction.
- If the lane is marked and signed for bicycle use only, drivers must NEVER use that lane as a turning lane, passing lane or for parking.



- The bicyclist is getting in place for a left turn at an intersection or turning left into a private road or driveway.
- There are unsafe conditions in the roadway such as parked cars, moving vehicles or machinery, fixed obstacles, pedestrians, animals, potholes or debris.
- The lane is too narrow for both a car and a bicycle to safely share the lane. In this case, it is safest to let the bicycle take the full lane.