

Rules of the Road

Preparation, training and common sense can make bicycling quite safe. Whether you are new to cycling or an experienced rider, knowing these safety tips will make your ride safer and more enjoyable.

Know the Rules of the Road

When you ride a bike in traffic, you are a driver. You have the same rights and responsibilities as the driver of an automobile. You must give signals, obey signs and lights, yield the right of way, and keep a sharp lookout for danger - just like cars do. To be a safe bicyclist, learn the following "Rules of the Road".

1. Always wear a helmet while riding.
2. NEVER wear headphones while riding.
3. Ride on the right, with traffic, a couple of feet from the edge.
4. Ride in a straight line, don't weave.
5. To allow traffic to pass, ride in a single file.
6. Pass on the left only. Look back to be sure it is clear and signal. When passing another cyclist, yell out "ON YOUR LEFT". When you hear someone calling out "On your left", don't turn around. Hold steady on course and ride straight.
7. Glance back often: always before moving right or left.
8. Warn other traffic when stopping or turning by giving required hand signals with the left hand and arm in the following manner. Try to make eye contact with drivers before turning.



9. Do not follow too closely behind other bicyclists or cars.
10. When stopping to rest, get off the pavement.
11. Do not draft behind motor vehicles.
12. Keep clear of road-edge hazards such as trash, drains and parked vehicles. Point out hazards to your fellow cyclists following you by pointing.
13. Watch out for sand and gravel.
14. Cross railroad tracks at a right angle.
15. Talk to your fellow cyclists. Let them know "CAR BACK", "PASSING ON YOUR LEFT", or "STOPPING".
16. Obey all traffic signs and signals.
17. Drive friendly and defensively.

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Riding Side by Side

Bicyclists often like to ride side by side so they can talk with each other. Riding two abreast is legal in nearly every state in the U.S. **as long as it doesn't interfere with vehicle traffic.** On a straight stretch of road with little traffic, motorists can easily and safely change lanes to overtake a cyclist. On a narrow road or with heavier traffic, be courteous! Pull into a single line well before cars reach you. Call out, "Car Back" to let other cyclists know it's time to single up. Never ride two abreast on a hilly or winding road because you must change lane position frequently according to sight lines and traffic conditions.

Dealing with Other Road Users

Some bicyclists fall for a "herd instinct" when riding in groups, as if there's nobody else on the road besides the group. It's tempting to play "follow the leader" in a group of bicyclists. When preparing a lane change or turn, **YOU ARE YOUR OWN LOOKOUT.** LOOK OUT for cars, or other bicycles approaching from the rear just the same as when you ride alone. Look left and right for traffic at stop signs — don't blindly follow the rider ahead of you into an intersection. And when you stop to rest, remember to pull completely off the road.

Riding in Wet Weather

Braking technique is different when the road surface is slippery or if you are turning. Under these conditions, the front wheel can skid. You must brake lightly and use the front brake less. In wet weather, the streets will be slick, and so will your rims. Dry the rims by applying the brakes **AHEAD** of time. It can take 100 feet or more before the brakes begin to work normally.

In the rain, pay special attention to metal and slick surfaces such as manhole covers, painted traffic markings, wet leaves and oil slicks; they are all especially slippery. Avoid these spots, or ride over them slowly, being careful not to turn, brake or accelerate. Be ready to put a foot down for balance. Avoid riding through puddles if you cannot see the bottom — a puddle can hide a nasty pothole. When you get home, it's a good idea to re-lubricate your bike chain to help prevent it from rusting.