

How to ride safely and courteously in traffic

Sharing the Road

Obey all traffic regulations.
Riding predictably and following the law are the keys to safe bicycling on streets.

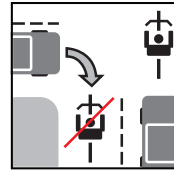
Ride in a straight line.
Avoid weaving between parked cars.

Scan the road behind.

Never ride against traffic.
Riding against traffic is dangerous and illegal.

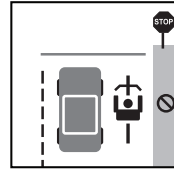
When necessary, use the entire lane.
Move toward the center when the lane is too narrow for motorists to pass safely.

Don't ride on the sidewalk.
It is illegal to bicycle on sidewalks in many areas. Learn to use the road.



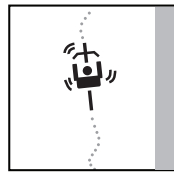
Take your place in traffic.

Ride on the right side with the flow of traffic, but don't hug the curb. Use the lane furthest to the right that heads in the direction you are traveling.



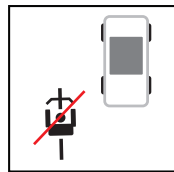
Stay off the sidewalks.

It is illegal to bike on sidewalks in many places throughout the region. Learn how to ride on roads, bike lanes and trails.



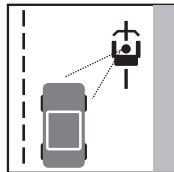
Ride predictably and visibly.

Ride a straight line. Don't swerve between parked cars. Weaving between cars is an unpredictable behavior that puts you in danger by confusing motorists.



Never ride against traffic.

Riding against traffic is dangerous and illegal.



Scan the road behind.

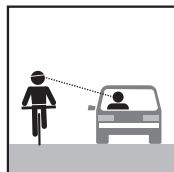
Look over your shoulder to check traffic regularly, or use a mirror. Even though bicycles have the right of way, be prepared to maneuver for safety.

Information courtesy of Mid-American Regional Council



Always wear a helmet.

Make sure chin straps are adjusted properly, buckled and snug. Unlike broken bones and road rash, head injuries can be debilitating or deadly. Wearing your helmet may save your life!



Make Eye Contact.

Confirm that you are seen. Establish eye contact with motorists so they know you are on the road, especially when passing in front of a motorist at an intersection. Be courteous to others.



Maintain and properly equip your bike.

Keep your bike tuned up and regularly check your brakes, tire pressure, crank and quick releases. Carry a water bottle, bike pump and patch kit. Secure any loads tightly to a rack.

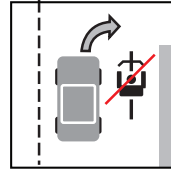
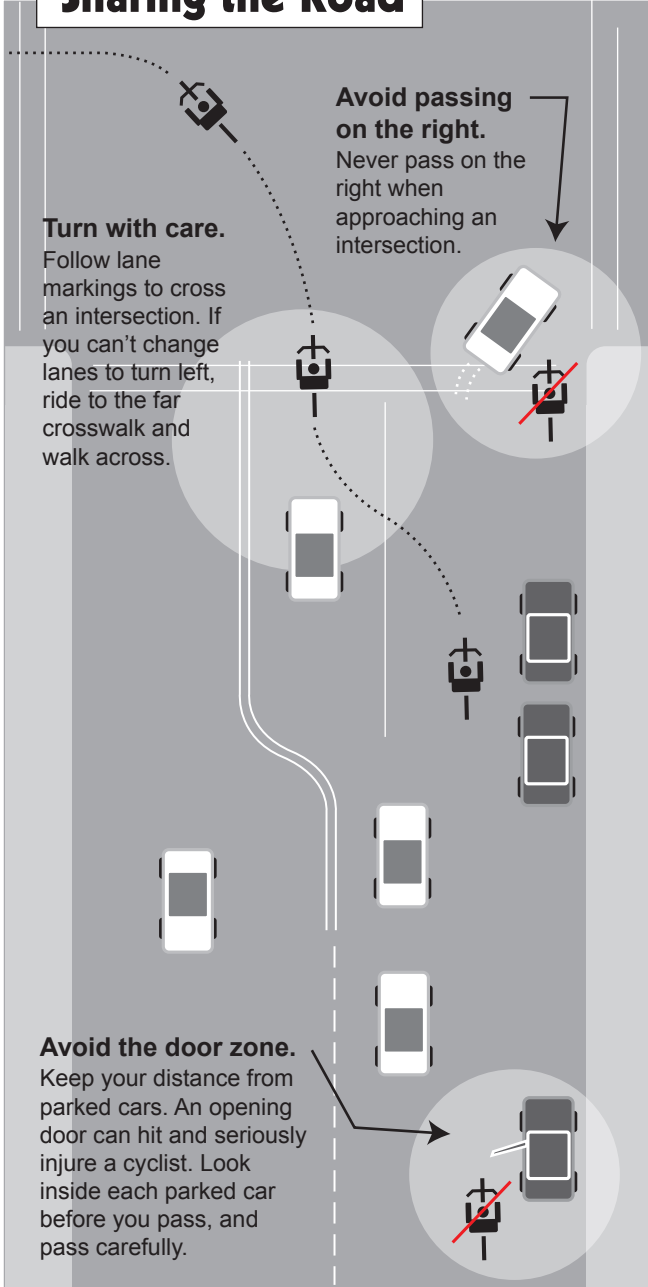


Take extra precautions after dark.

At night, use headlights and wear reflective clothing. Always use a strong white headlight and red rear light. Make sure your bike has wheel and pedal reflectors.

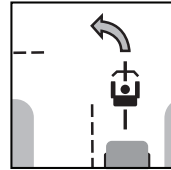
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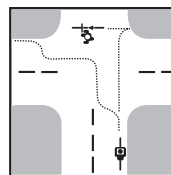
Avoid passing on the right.

Motorists and other cyclists may not see a bicycle passing on the right. NEVER pass on the right when approaching an intersection. Don't ride straight in a lane marked right turn only.



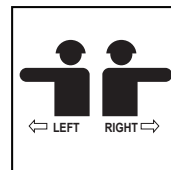
Turn with care.

Follow lane markings. Don't turn left from the right lane. If hazards narrow the usable roadway width, assert your place in the roadway before making a left turn.



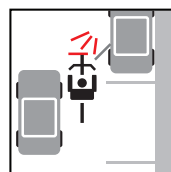
Turning Left.

Signal your intentions and move to the left turn lane, completing your turn when it is safe. Or, ride to the far crosswalk and walk across.



Use hand signals.

Signaling is a matter of law, courtesy and self-protection. Always signal your intentions and obey all signs, signals and pavement markings. Signal when changing lanes.



Stay away from the door zone.

Ride more than an arm's length from parked cars. Remember, you have the right to ride in a traffic lane if it is too narrow to share with a car.

Always be aware of your surroundings.

Many traffic decisions are based on judgement of a situation at the time it happens. If you sense a potentially dangerous situation, wait and let it pass before proceeding on your ride. This could include waiting for traffic to pass before changing lanes or waiting for traffic to pass before turning right on a red light.

Information courtesy of Mid-American Regional Council

How to ride safely in groups with other bicyclists.

Based on the principles taught in the League of American Bicyclists effective cycling program.

Cycling with friends, traveling rapidly and safely with confidence in your companions, is a joy. However, there is a certain cycling etiquette, or Rules of the Road, of which you should be aware whenever cycling in a group.

- 1. Be Predictable** – Group riding requires even more attention to predictability than riding alone. Other riders expect you to continue straight ahead at a constant speed unless you indicate differently. Being predictable will make motorists happier and keep you safer.
- 2. Use Signals** – Use hand and verbal signals to communicate with members of the group and with other traffic. Use hand signals for turning and stopping. Extend left arm for left turn and right arm for right turn. Put left hand down at the side with fingers slightly spread for STOP. Use hand signals to change lanes in traffic.
- 3. Give Warnings** – Warn cyclists behind you well in advance of changes in your direction or speed. To notify the group of change in path, the lead rider should call out "left turn" or "right turn" in addition to hand signals.
- 4. Change Positions Correctly** – Generally, slower traffic stays right, so you should try to pass others on their left. Say "on your left" to warn the cyclist ahead that you are passing. If you are approaching someone on the right or need to pass someone on the right, say "on your right" clearly since this is an unusual maneuver.
- 5. Announce Hazards** – When riding in a group, most of the cyclists do not have a good view of the road surface ahead, so it is important to announce holes, glass, gravel, grates, and other hazards. The leader (or rider in front of a group) should indicate road hazards by pointing down to the left or right and call by "hole", "bump", "road kill", etc. where required for safety.
- 6. Watch For Traffic Coming From The Rear** – Since those in front cannot see traffic approaching from the rear, it is the responsibility the riders in the back to inform the others by calling out "car back." Around curves, on narrow roads, or when riding double (side-by-side) it is helpful if those up front call out "car up" to those in the back. When you hear "car back" move right to become a single file line so as not to impede traffic.

- 7. Watch Out At Intersections** – When approaching intersections that require vehicles to yield or stop, the lead rider will say "slowing" or "stopping" to those behind to indicate change in speed. When passing through an intersection, some cyclists say "clear" if there is no crossing traffic. This is a dangerous practice that should be abandoned. It encourages riders to follow the leader, letting others do their thinking for them. Each cyclist is responsible for verifying that the way is indeed clear.

When stopping at an intersection, it is tempting for riders at the rear of the group to ride up next to those at the front, blocking the whole right side of the road. Don't do it: it's illegal and discourteous. Stay two abreast or single file.

- 8. Leave A Gap For Cars** – When riding up hills or on narrow roads where you are impeding faster traffic, leave a gap for cars between every three to four bicycles. That way a motorist can take advantage of shorter passing intervals and eventually move piecemeal around the entire group
- 9. Move Off The Road When You Stop** – Whether you are stopping because of mechanical problems or to regroup with your companions, or just shooting the breeze with someone, move well off the road so you don't interfere with traffic (both cars AND other cyclists). When you start up again, each cyclist should look for and yield to traffic.
- 10. Ride One or Two Across** – Ride single file or double file as appropriate to the roadway and traffic conditions and where allowed by law. Most state vehicle codes permit narrow vehicles such as bicycles to ride double file within the lane. Even where riding double is legal, slow traffic such as bicycles should not impede traffic. On many two lane roads, you should ride single file when cars are trying to pass you.
- 11. By law, bicycles are required to follow the same rules as motorists.** Stop at signs and red lights, signal turns and lane changes, slow traffic stays right, move left to make a left turn, pass when safe and allow adequate distance between yourself and the vehicle being passed.

The League of American Bicyclists is a non-profit association working to protect the rights of cyclist through national advocacy, education and grassroots organizing.