

Road Safety: It Starts with You

Helmets

An approved bicycle helmet can greatly reduce the risk of permanent injury or death in the event of a fall or crash. A helmet works by absorbing the forces of a crash, so if the helmet has been in a collision, it has done its job and should be replaced, even if there is no visible damage.

The best helmet is one that fits properly, is worn correctly and has been manufactured to meet strict safety standards. Look for a safety standards sticker meeting the approval of safety organizations such as the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Snell, ANSI, ASTM, BSI and SAA. Remember, that different helmets are made to fit heads of different shapes, so make sure you try on several before choosing.

Other sports helmets such as hockey, baseball, and football are not recommended for cycling. They are designed and tested for different types of impact.



WRONG



WRONG



RIGHT

To provide maximum protection, the helmet should fit level and square on the head. The front should cover the forehead. It should sit snug on your head, without fastening the chin strap, and not slip when you move your head. Sizing pads are provided which can help adjust the fit. The straps should be adjusted to meet just below the ear, and fastened comfortably without choking.

In Ontario, every cyclist under the age of 18 must wear an approved bicycle helmet.

Handling Skills

Handling skills are best practised away from all traffic in a large, flat, deserted area. An empty parking lot is ideal.

Selecting the Right Gear

Handling skills are easier to learn in a low easy gear where the legs rotate quickly. Fast leg rotation provides better balance, less fatigue and more speed. Just remember, on a geared bike, a) Inside = low and easiest gear, b) Outside = high and hardest gear.

Shifting Gears

On a hub geared bicycle or a derailleur bicycle, smooth gear shifting is a key skill. The basic rules for gear use are:

- ∞ Shift into a low, easy gear before you stop.
- ∞ Use low, easy gears when going up hills. Shift into lower gears before you begin to work too hard.
- ∞ Use higher, harder gears when you begin to bounce on the seat from pedalling too fast.
- ∞ On the level, use a gear that gives you fast, easy leg spin - about 70 to 100 rpm.
- ∞ On a derailleur bicycle always pedal forward while shifting gears.
- ∞ Avoid pedalling slowly and pushing hard in your highest gears which can cause knee problems.

Riding Slowly

The slower you go, the less stable your balance is on a bicycle. Try all the above manoeuvres at slow speeds. Mastering these skills at slower speeds can help avoid spills.

Getting On and Off

Being able to get on and off the bicycle smoothly lets you start and stop safely. Practise your starts from beside the bicycle and from straddling the bike. Practise stopping and straddling the bike, and then stopping and getting off the bike. If practising on the road, dismount on the curbside.

Straight Line Riding

Riding in a straight line is the key to riding safely in traffic. Practise by following a painted line in a parking lot. Because you maintain balance by turning the front wheel slightly from side to side as you pedal, riding within a path of 15 centimetres wide is very good. Try not to move your upper body as you pedal - let your legs do the work.

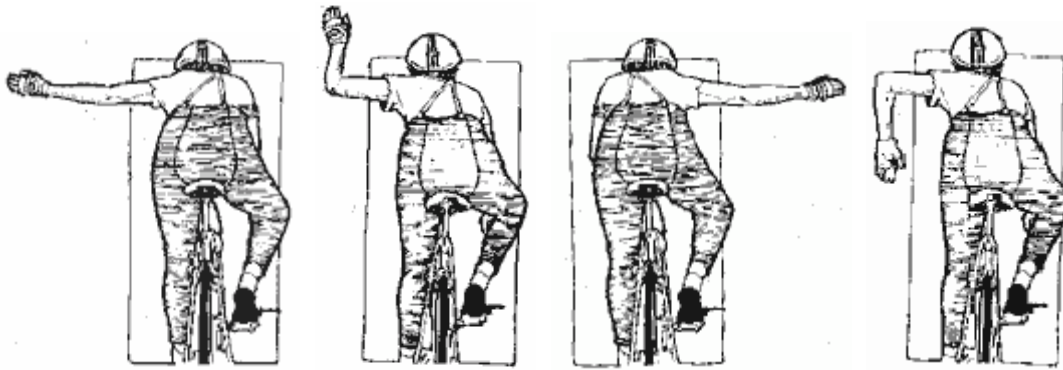
Shoulder Checking

Shoulder checking involves looking back over your shoulder to see what the traffic behind you is doing. This manoeuvre is vital for making safe turns in traffic. It is also difficult to do without wandering from a straight path. Practise riding in a straight line while checking behind you over both shoulders.

Signalling

Making signals requires being able to ride with only one hand on the handlebars. Because it is very easy to go off course when riding one-handed, practise signalling while riding along a straight line. Keep both hands on the handlebars while actually turning.

Hand Signals



Left Turn:
left arm out.

Right Turn:
left arm out,
up.

Alternate Right Turn:
right arm out.

Stop: left arm
out,
down, palm
back.

Sequence Practice

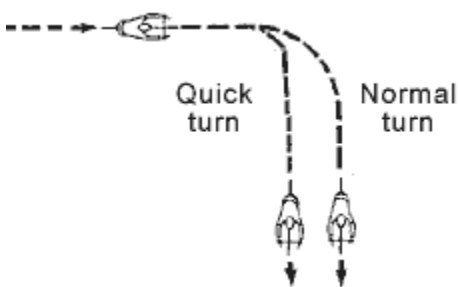
Practise shoulder checking before signalling to make turns. Practise shoulder checking, signalling, shoulder checking before moving, when changing lanes, or position within a lane. Before stopping, signal, and then use both hands on the brakes to stop.

Turning

Turning accurately can also be tricky. Practise doing figure eights. Try to follow the same path each time you make the figure, then, gradually tighten the turns.

For more stability in turns, lead with your chin, drop your inside shoulder, keep the inside pedal up and turn the inside knee out in each turn.

Slalom Riding



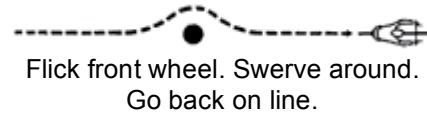
Slalom riding is an exhilarating way to practise quick and accurate turns. Pick a straight line in the parking lot. Swoop from side to side along the line making bigger swoops and smaller swoops.

Emergency handling skills

The first step collision prevention is to scan the road ahead for potential hazards. Steer clear of debris and holes in the pavement. Learn to anticipate errors by motorists, pedestrians and other cyclists. Don't assume they see you. When in doubt, use caution. No matter how skilled or careful a rider you are, you will encounter hazards that leave you little time to react. Emergency handling skills such as dodging obstacles, quick turns and emergency braking will enable you to avoid these hazards. Practise them in an empty parking lot or a school playground.

Dodging Obstacles

You must react quickly to obstacles such as sewer grates without straying wildly from your path. To practise this, ride along a straight line at an obstacle, such as a piece of cloth. Avoid it by dodging around it quickly and then get back onto your line as fast as possible.



Quick Turns

Quick turns are the fastest way to change course or to take a corner. They are also a good way to avoid collisions, as long as the road is dry. Lean hard into the turn leading with your chin and your inside pedal up, your inside knee out and your inside shoulder down.

Hand Brake Bicycles

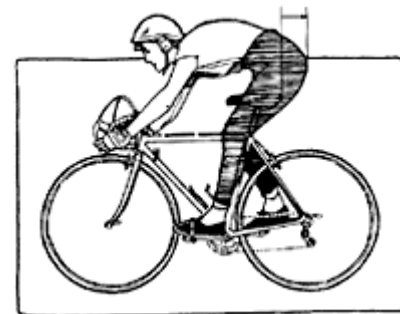
On a bicycle equipped with front and rear hand brakes, the front brake does 80 per cent of the braking. Use of the rear brake helps to keep the bicycle under control. So, to stop effectively, you must use both brakes.

Coaster Brake Bicycles

Coaster brakes are located in the rear hub. They are applied by pedalling backwards.

Braking

Quick stops can be crucial in an emergency. You must use both brakes. But if you put on the front brake too hard you might go over the handlebars. Apply the front brake harder than the rear brake. Let up on the front brake if the back wheel starts to skid. Try riding towards a specific point, and see how fast you can stop without going past the point. Brake in a straight line without swerving. For better control, stand on both pedals, push your hips back on the seat and get low over the frame as you brake. This counteracts the normal forward weight transfer caused by hard braking, and by allowing greater front brake usage, you can stop in a shorter distance.



Hips back, stay low

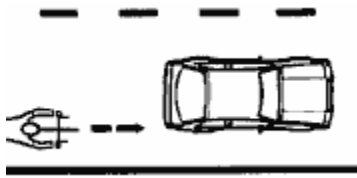
Riding Standing Up

Learning to ride standing on the pedals is valuable. This position gives you power to get up hills. It gets you going from stops and it lets you see what is ahead. Eventually your balance may become better standing on the pedals than sitting on the seat. Stand up over bumps, railway and streetcar tracks.

Riding with Children

Use care and caution when cycling with young children who are too young to ride themselves. A bicycle mounted child seat sits high behind the bicycle seat and over the rear wheel. The child is secured into the seat by safety straps. Keep in mind that because of its height, this type carrier alters your centre of gravity while riding and increases the risk of losing balance. Only children who can sit unsupported for the entire ride should be in this carrier.

A recommended safer way to carry children is by using a child bicycle trailer towed behind your bicycle. Bike trailers are stable and not prone to tipping. Most trailers are attached, either directly to the bike frame or the seat post, by means of a u-joint. Trailers provide protection from the elements while allowing the child to see out. Check with a local specialty bicycle



retailer on these types of child carriers. It's also a good thing to start your child wearing an approved bicycle helmet for their age when using a child carrier. Putting a helmet on them in the early years will help get them into the habit of wearing a helmet when they begin to ride themselves, which is required by law. Set an example and wear one yourself.

Riding in traffic

The Ontario Highway Traffic Act (HTA) defines the bicycle as a *vehicle* that belongs on the road. Riding on the road means mixing with other traffic. This is only safe when all traffic uses the same *rules of the road*.

When everyone operates under these rules, actions become more predictable. Drivers can anticipate your moves and plan accordingly. Likewise, you too can anticipate and deal safely with the actions of others.

The bicycle, by nature, differs from most other vehicles in two important ways. First, the bicycle is very narrow. Consequently, where most vehicles use a full lane, the bicycle uses only a fraction of a lane.

Second, the bicycle is often slower than most other vehicles. In urban areas, cyclists generally move at one-third to two-thirds the speed of the traffic around them, except where traffic congestion slows cars and trucks. However, in rural areas, or on faster roads the difference is much greater. How a cyclist manoeuvres in traffic will depend on their speed in relation to motorists.

Where do you Ride?

Because of the special nature of the bicycle, there are two rules of the road to which cyclists must pay special attention.

1. *slower traffic stays right.*
2. *slower traffic must give way to faster traffic when safe and practical.*

These rules generally apply this way: cyclists should ride close to the right hand edge of the road without a curb, or about one metre from a curb, when it is safe to do so, unless they are turning left or going faster than other vehicles.

Check for local regulations that affect where you may cycle in your municipality. Bicycles are prohibited on some provincial highways. (See Section 10 - [Legal Responsibility](#))

Going Straight Ahead

When going straight ahead, use the right-hand through lane. Stay about one metre from the curb to avoid curbside hazards and ride in a straight line.



Ride straight. One metre. Avoid drain grates, service covers and other hazards.



Use straight path. One metre from parked cars.



No

Around Parked Vehicles

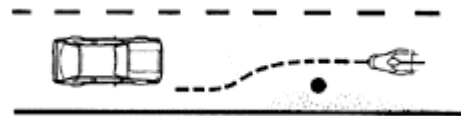
Ride in a straight line at least one metre away from parked vehicles to avoid the possibility of the opening of doors. Keep to this line even if the vehicles are far apart to avoid continuous swerving and to keep you in the motorist's field of vision.

Which Lane?

The lane you take depends on your speed relative to other traffic. Slower traffic stays right, in the curb lane.

Taking a Lane

In urban areas where a curb lane is too narrow to share safely with a motorist, it is legal to take the whole lane by riding in the centre of it. This action is safer than riding near the curb, which may encourage a motorist to squeeze, by where there isn't sufficient room. If you are uncomfortable in the centre of the lane, take an alternate route. On high-speed roads, it is not safe to take the whole lane.



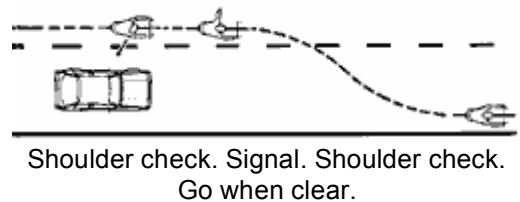
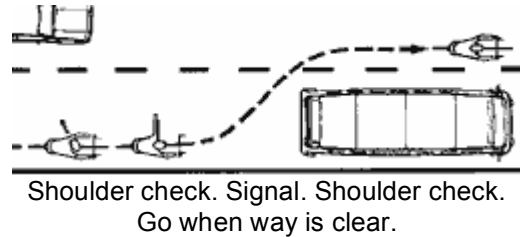
Ride in lane centre when lane is too narrow to share or it is dangerous by the curb.

Changing Lanes

When changing lanes, remember that vehicles in the other lane have the right-of-way. The person moving into a new lane must always wait for an opening. Try to make eye contact with motorists to ensure that they see you and know your intentions.

Changing Lanes to the Left

To move left one lane, shoulder check on your left to find an opening, signal your move with a left turn signal, shoulder check again then go to the right-hand side of the new lane when an opening appears.

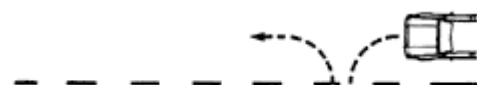
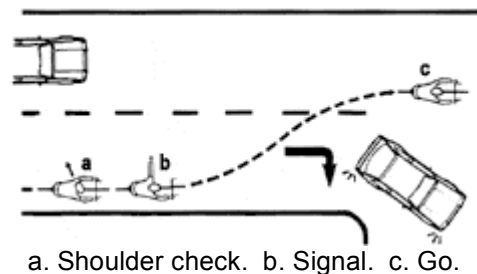


Changing Lanes to the Right

The vehicle in the right lane has the right-of-way. To move right one lane, shoulder check to your right to find an opening, signal for a right turn, shoulder check again then move into the opening. Go to the right-hand side of the new lane unless hazards indication otherwise.

Right-turn Exit Lanes

When the curb lane becomes a right-turn exit lane, to go straight through, change lanes to the right through lane. Shoulder check, signal, shoulder check again, then move over to the right side of the new lane when an opening appears. continue straight through the intersection.



Going Through Intersections

Intersections are more numerous than most people think, and are places where many collisions occur, so stay alert. Any point where the paths of two vehicles can cross is a potential intersection. Often residential areas contain many mini-intersections where driveways and alleys enter streets. Stay at least one metre from curbs in residential areas so that drivers about to enter the road can see you, and you can see them.

Right-of-Way

Right-of-way determines who goes through an intersection first. Before proceeding into an intersection, give way to pedestrians and vehicles already in the intersection or approaching the intersection so closely that it would be hazardous for you to proceed.

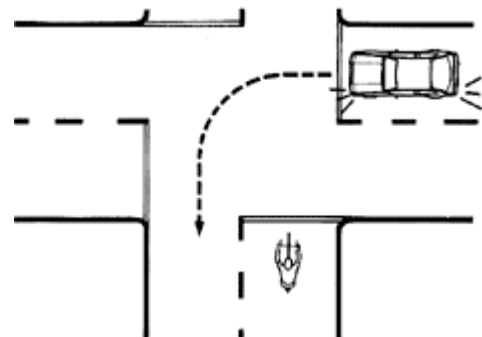
The following outlines the right-of-way at intersections with and without traffic controls.

Without traffic Controls

When you approach an intersection without traffic control signals, stop signs or yield signs at the same time as another vehicle, you must yield the right-of-way to the vehicle approaching from the right.

All-way Stop

At intersections with all-way stop signs, the first vehicle to come to a complete stop should have the right-of-way. If two vehicles arrive at an intersection and stop simultaneously, the vehicle on the right has the right-of-way.



Vehicle on the right goes first.

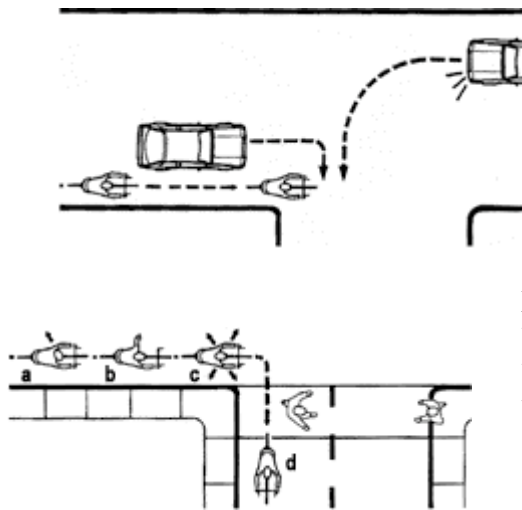
Why be Careful in Intersections?

Most car-bike collisions occur at intersections. Obey signs and traffic signals, yield the right-of-way properly and always watch for turning vehicles.

Moving Through Traffic Signal Intersections

When the light is green, move quickly through the intersection. The longer you are in the intersection, the greater your exposure to hazards. There are two rules for safely crossing intersections.

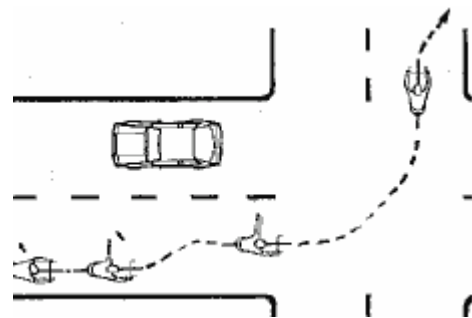
1. Watch for vehicles turning across your path and be prepared to avoid them.
2. Always watch for traffic signal changes and be prepared to stop if you are not yet into the intersection.



a. Shoulder check. b. Signal. c. Scan.
d. Turn when path is clear.

Right Turns

Right hand turns are simple. Well ahead of the turn, get to the right-most lane, since you must turn from the right hand curbside to the right hand curbside. Shoulder check for overtaking traffic, then signal the turn. Scan the intersection for pedestrians, who have the right-of-way, and wait for them to clear your path. You must also stop for red traffic signals and stop signs before turning. Turn when your path is clear and no cars coming from your left will be in the intersection as you make your turn.



Shoulder check. Signal. Shoulder check. Go to centre of lane. Go when clear. Shoulder check. Signal and return to right side of road.

Left Turns

Left turns intimidate many cyclists. They are undoubtedly the most complex traffic manoeuvre a cyclist will make. There are two basic ways to turn left at an intersection, depending on your cycling skill, the volume and speed of traffic.

1. **Pedestrian turn** - Walk the bike across the pedestrian crosswalk. Even experienced cyclists sometimes do this, depending on traffic conditions.

2. **Vehicular turn** - This is normally the most convenient way to turn left except where traffic is so congested that it is difficult to get into position before the turn. Vehicular style turns can be relatively simple on quiet residential streets but they require more cycling skill on multi-lane roads.

On rural or high-speed roads you should time your left turn so that you can complete the whole turn at once without affecting motorists. You don't want to get caught in the middle of high-speed traffic. If necessary slow down or stop at the right edge of the road and wait until you get a large enough gap in traffic to make your turn safely. If the traffic is heavy without a sufficient gap, continue on to the intersection and do a pedestrian turn.

Two Lane Roads

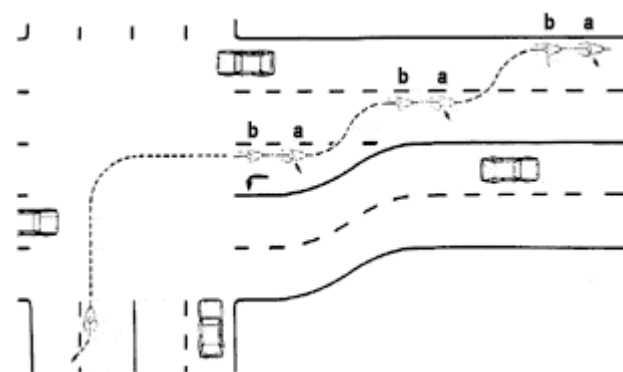
When there is a single lane each way, plan early. Shoulder check, signal, shoulder check again, wait for space, and then go to the centre of the lane at the entrance of the intersection. Signal, waiting for opposing traffic to clear. Complete the turn to the centre of the lane before moving back to the right side of the road edge.

Multi-lane Left Turns

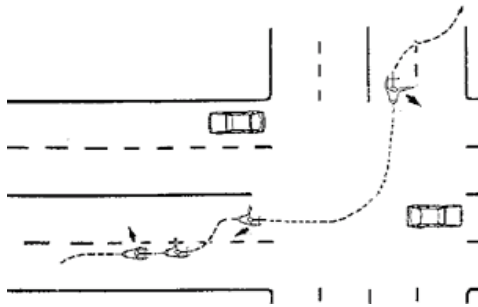
Two possibilities exist: moving to a *dedicated left turn lane*, and using *multiple left turn lanes*. Both require the cyclist to move over lane by lane to get to the appropriate turning position. These manoeuvres can be quite complex and require specific cycling skills.

A cyclist must be able to shoulder check without swerving, judge gaps in traffic, signal intentions to motorists, shoulder check, and move decisively and quickly when safe to do so. You can develop these skills by practising on quiet streets first. As you gain confidence and skill you will find it easier to turn left on busier streets.

- ∞ **Dedicated turn lane** - Move lane by lane to the dedicated turn lane by shoulder checking, signalling, shoulder checking, finding a gap in traffic and moving left. Wait to turn at the right-hand side of the left turn lane, if it is wide enough, or at the lane centre. Go when the oncoming traffic is clear and the traffic signal is green.
- ∞ **Multiple left turn lanes** - When more than one left turn lane exists, use the turn lane at the extreme right. Use your lane-changing skills to get to this lane. Take the centre of the lane. If all traffic must turn left and the lane is wide, you may ride on the right side of the lane.



a. Shoulder check. b. Signal.
Wait for opening and go.



Completing a Left Turn

Always complete your turn into the equivalent of the lane you turned from. Once the turn is complete, shoulder check, signal, shoulder check and move over lane by lane to the right, as close to the curb as is appropriate for the road conditions.

Signs and traffic signals

Key traffic signs and signals for cyclists.



Roadwork ahead. The speed limit and lanes may be reduced.



Special bicycle route.



No bicycles allowed. Stop and wait until the way is clear before entering the intersection.



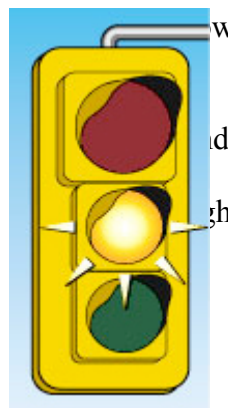
Diamond lanes (Diamond lanes) for specific types of vehicles, either all the time or during certain hours. They can include: buses, taxis, bicycles and vehicles with three or more people.



These signs indicate

Yield to traffic in the intersection or close to it. Stop if necessary and go only when the way is clear.

Roadwork ahead. The speed limit and lanes may be reduced.

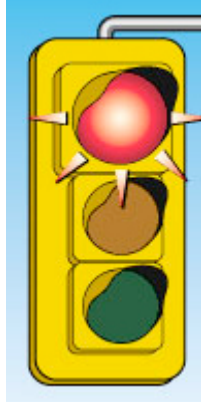




Railway crossing ahead. The sign also shows the angle at which the railway tracks cross the

road.

One-way road. Travel in direction of arrow.

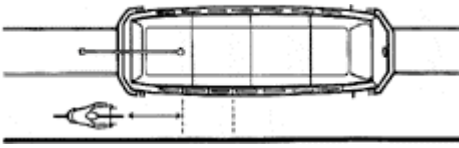


Flashing red light

Stop and move through the intersection when it is safe to do so.

A flashing green light or left-pointing green arrow with a green light, permits you to turn left, go straight ahead or turn right from the proper lane. Oncoming traffic still faces a red light.

Remember, during a power failure, intersection traffic lights will not work. Treat the intersection as an all-way stop. Yield the right-of-way and use caution.

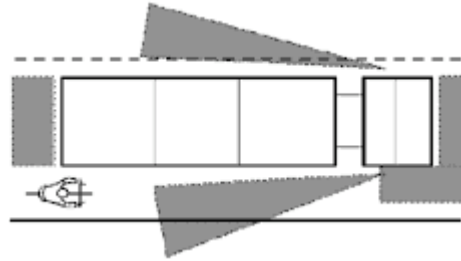


Dealing with trucks and buses

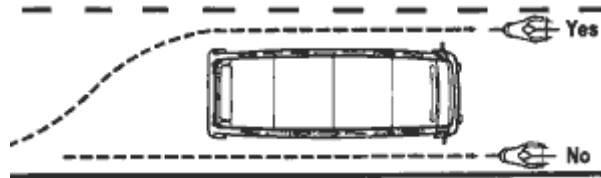
Blind Spots

Bus and truck drivers have large blind spots where they are unable to see passing vehicles, particularly bicycles. Please stay out of the blind spots.

If you can see the eyes of the driver in their mirror, then they can see you. Try to catch the driver's attention, or stay well ahead of, or well behind their vehicle.



Stay out of the blinds spots, except when passing.



Pass buses and trucks driving in the curb lane, only on their left.

Streetcars

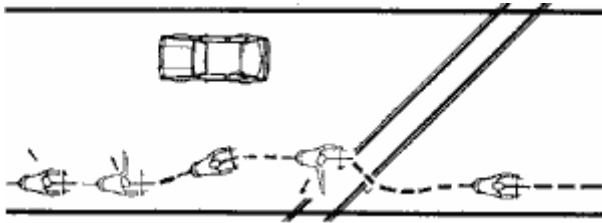
By law, you must pass streetcars on the right. When they stop to pick up or left off passengers, you must stop two metres behind the rear door until all passengers have boarded or on the sidewalk. If a safety zone has been designated for the passengers, this law does not apply.

School Buses

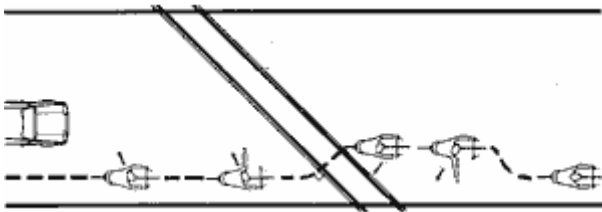
When the upper red lights of a stopped school bus are flashing and flashing stop arm is extended, traffic in both directions must stop. If you are coming from behind the bus, stop at least 20 metres away, and a safe distance when approaching from the opposite direction. The only exception is if you are on a road divided by a median strip. A median is a barrier - a raised or lowered, paved or unpaved strip dividing traffic travelling in both directions. In this case, only vehicles approaching a school bus from behind must stop.

You may not proceed until the bus resumes motion or the red signal lights have stopped flashing and the stop arm is retracted. Failing to stop for a school bus is against the law, and you could be convicted of a fine of \$400 to \$2,000 and six demerit points on the first offence. This law applies on all roads; no matter how many lanes or the speed limit.

Road Hazards



Shoulder check. Signal and shoulder check. Move left. Cross at right angle. Shoulder check, signal, shoulder check. Move back by curb.



Put yourself in the right position to cross the tracks well ahead of time. Shoulder check. Signal to drivers behind and shoulder check. Cross at right angles. Shoulder check. Signal and shoulder check. Move back by curb.

across instead. Even at slow speeds diagonal tracks can spill you.

Where tracks run parallel to the direction of vehicle travel, lane changing and left turns become extremely hazardous. Wait for breaks in traffic and cross the tracks at right angles. At tracked intersections where traffic is heavy and you want to turn left, walk your bike in the crosswalk.

Surface Hazards

Surface hazards exist on every street, but they are most common close to the curb, where much of your riding is done. Cyclists must always watch for:

Holes and depressions that can buckle wheels or throw the rider. Avoid them with gradual course changes or the obstacle dodging technique, [described in section four](#), or go through them slowly. Look for sunken service covers, sewer grates and potholes.

Loose or slippery surfaces can spill you. Go over them slowly and corner carefully, keeping the bicycle as upright as possible. Specifically, watch for sand, gravel, mud, dirt, oil, water, fallen leaves and freshly painted lines.

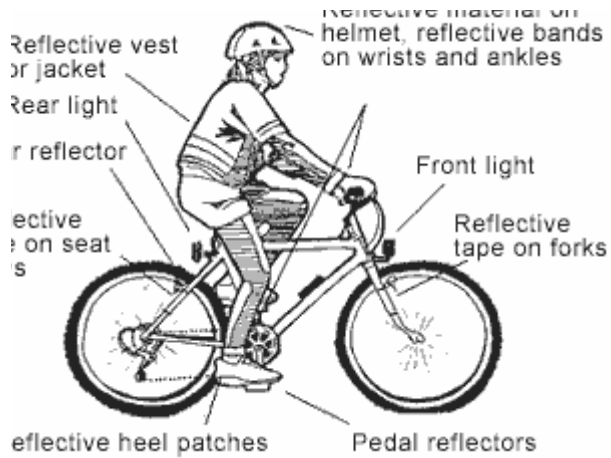
Railway and Streetcar Tracks

Railway and streetcar tracks are very dangerous. Crossing at the wrong angle, they can spill you and damage your bicycle wheels.

Always cross the tracks at right angles. Plan your crossing well ahead of time, slow down and put yourself into the best road position to make a right-angle crossing.

If the tracks are at an angle to the road, you may need a full lane. Use hand signals to slow traffic behind you and give you room to cross the tracks safely. Go slowly and stand on the pedals when crossing over particularly bumpy tracks.

If it is too difficult to cross the tracks safely, dismount and walk your bike



Raised surfaces can buckle wheels and throw you out of control. Use the obstacle dodging technique to avoid them, or take them slowly and carefully. Look out for raised service covers, sewer grates, tracks, speed bumps, stones, driveway entrances, raised lane markers and reflectors.

Sharp objects cut or puncture tires, sometimes causing blowouts that result in spills or crashes. Watch for nails, tacks, glass, staples, wire, pins, sharp rocks and sharp

pieces of metal.

When a tire goes flat, slow down gently to a stop, then walk your bike to avoid spills, and ruined tires and rims. Be prepared. Flat tires are a common bicycle problem. Carry a spare tube, tire irons, pump and repair kit.

Riding on Sidewalks

Sidewalk cycling is very dangerous. Many collisions between cyclists and motor vehicles occur where sidewalks, driveways and parking lot access become unexpected intersections. Make sure you know and obey your local by-laws concerning sidewalk riding.

Cyclists are also at danger whenever they come off a sidewalk onto the road. A bicyclist is not permitted to ride in pedestrian crosswalk or crossover. Walk your bike across.

When riding on shared bike/walking paths, ride at a slow speed, yield to pedestrians and when approaching pedestrians from behind, signal your approach by using your bell well in advance.

Be Seen and Heard

Because bicycles are one of the smallest vehicles on the road, it is important for cyclists to be as visible as possible to other road users at all times. This means wearing white or bright coloured clothing when you ride. A white or yellow helmet (particularly one with reflective material on it) also helps to make you more visible.

Like driving, cycling requires your full attention. Avoid using a portable music player, headphones and a cell phone when riding.

Lighting

By law your bicycle must have a white front light and a red rear light or reflector when you ride one-half hour before sunset and one-half hour after sunrise. As well, the law requires white reflective strips on the front forks and red reflective strips on the rear stays.

Clothing can improve or reduce visibility. Yellow and white stand out best at night; dark colours are difficult to see. Pedal reflectors, reflective bands on wrists make your hand signals

more visible. Reflective bands on your ankles or heels, clothes and helmet help others see you.

Dawn and dusk

Dawn and dusk are especially dangerous times to ride. When the sun is very low, light comes directly into your eyes and the eyes of motorists, causing short periods of blindness. Sunglasses, especially polarized ones, help.

When riding directly into or away from the sun at this time, leave extra room and be ready for sudden stops or swerves by traffic around you. Be particularly alert at intersections and scan carefully.

Be Heard

Bicycles are very quiet vehicles, so it is important to warn others of your approach. This includes motorists, as well as other cyclists, pedestrians, in-line skaters, joggers, and others. By law all bikes must have a working bell or horn to announce your approach. At times it is just as effective and more courteous to shout something like "passing on the left" when overtaking other cyclists and pedestrians. This is particularly important when using shared recreation pathways.

Cycling in Rural Areas

Cycling in rural areas or touring can be one of the most pleasant and exhilarating cycling experiences. Aside from practising the same safe riding habits as when riding in city areas, there are certain precautions to take and hazards to be aware of to help ensure a safe and smooth trip.

Carrying a Load

While there are a number of extra items you may need to take with you when touring, remember that riding with a load affects your stability and increases stopping distance. If you have a few loaded packs try to distribute the weight evenly.

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To be prepared for a breakdown, put together a kit containing the key tools needed for an emergency repair. For example, a tire patch kit, spare tube, bicycle pump, small screwdriver and wrenches suitable for tightening bolts of various sizes.

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Dealing with Other Vehicles

As in urban areas, drive as close as practicable to the right side of the road, shoulder check, signal and shoulder check before attempting a lane change and obey all traffic signs, signals and laws. In less densely populated areas, motorists may not be anticipating cyclists, so drive defensively.

On two lane roads, watch out for motorists travelling in the opposite direction overtaking other vehicles by moving into your lane. Because bicycles are relatively small, they often can't be seen from a distance.

When approaching sharp corners, it is a good idea to swing wide slightly in order to be visible to other vehicles as long as possible. The crest of a hill can be dangerous. When going over the crest of a hill, make sure you are as close to the right shoulder as possible.

Anticipate such situations and take steps to make yourself more visible by wearing brightly coloured clothing and helmet.

Take Care of Yourself

It is wise to train for long trips to ensure that you build the physical stamina required. Practise riding steadily in a medium gear where you can spin your legs quickly. A good quick spin gives you the best combination of endurance and speed. Try to pedal between 75 and 100 rpm.

Be sure that you wear clothing appropriate for the weather. Take care of your body especially in hot weather by drinking water often and eating every two hours.

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Traveling in Groups

There are a few safety tips to keep in mind when travelling in groups.

- ∞ Ride in single file on the road.
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- ∞ If you are travelling in a large group, break up into smaller groups of about four to six. Keep about a kilometre between groups to allow traffic to pass.

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Dogs can be a hazard if they begin to chase you. Make sure that you steer clear of the dog. Stay calm, and if necessary talk to the dog in a firm voice. If the dog starts to attack you, get off your bicycle and keep it between you and the dog.

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HTA 153 - One ways streets - ride in the designated direction on one-way streets.

HTA 147 - Slow moving traffic - any vehicle moving slower than the normal traffic speed should drive in the right-hand lane, or as close as practicable to the right edge of the road except when preparing to turn left or when passing another vehicle. For cyclists, you must ride far enough out from the curb to maintain a straight line, clear of sewer grates, debris, potholes, and parked car doors. You may occupy any part of a lane when you safety warrants it. Never compromise your safety for the convenience of a motorist behind you.

HTA 142 - Signalling a turn - before turning, look behind you and signal your turn. Cyclists can use their right arm to signal a right turn.

HTA 140/144(29) - Crosswalks - stop for pedestrians at crosswalks and walk your bike when crossing at a crosswalk.

HTA 166 - Streetcars - stop two metres behind streetcar doors and wait until passengers have boarded or departed and reached the curb.

HTA 175 (12) - Stopped School Buses - stop for stopped school buses when the upper alternating red lights are flashing and the stop arm is out.

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HTA 62 (17) - Reflective tape - a bike must have white reflective tape on the front forks and red reflective tape on the rear forks.

HTA 75 (5) - Bell - a bike must have a bell or horn in good working order.

HTA 64 - Brakes - a bike must have at least one brake system on the rear wheel. When you put on the brakes, you should be able to skid on dry, level pavement.

HTA 218 - Identification - Cyclists must identify themselves when stopped by police for breaking traffic laws. The police officer will ask you for your correct name and address.

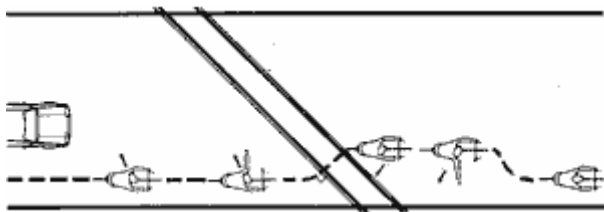
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HTA 104 - Helmets - Every cyclist under the age of eighteen must wear an approved bicycle helmet. Parents or guardians shall not knowingly permit cyclists under sixteen to ride without a helmet.

HTA 179 - Dismounted bicyclist - Cyclists are required to ride on the right-hand side of the road. If you are walking your bike on a highway where there are no sidewalks, you are considered a pedestrian and you should walk on the left-hand side of the road facing traffic. If it is not safe for you to cross the road to face traffic, you may walk your bike on the right-hand side of the road.



Put yourself in the right position to cross the tracks well ahead of time. Shoulder check. Signal to drivers behind and shoulder check. Cross at right angles. Shoulder check. Signal and shoulder check. Move back by curb.

Railway and Streetcar Tracks

Railway and streetcar tracks are very dangerous. Crossing at the wrong angle, they can spill you and damage your bicycle wheels.

Always cross the tracks at right angles. Plan your crossing well ahead of time, slow down and put yourself into the best road position to make a right-angle

If the tracks are at an angle to the road, you may need a full lane. Use hand signals to slow traffic behind you and give you room to cross the tracks safely. Go slowly and stand on the pedals when crossing over particularly bumpy tracks.

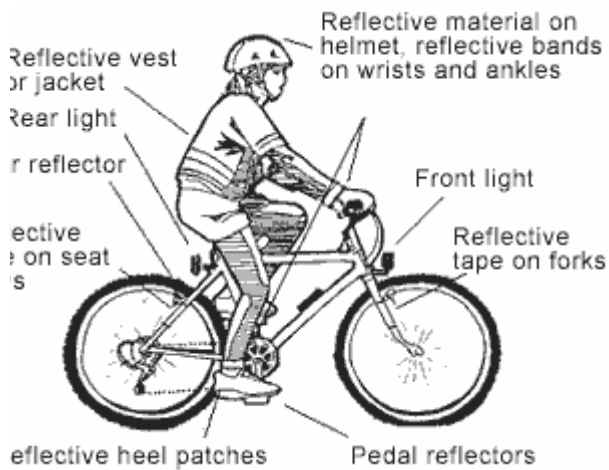
If it is too difficult to cross the tracks safely, dismount and walk your bike across instead. Even at slow speeds diagonal tracks can spill you.

Where tracks run parallel to the direction of vehicle travel, lane changing and left turns become extremely hazardous. Wait for breaks in traffic and cross the tracks at right angles. At tracked intersections where traffic is heavy and you want to turn left, walk your bike in the crosswalk.

Surface Hazards

Surface hazards exist on every street, but they are most common close to the curb, where much of your riding is done. Cyclists must always watch for:

Holes and depressions that can buckle wheels or throw the rider. Avoid them with gradual course changes or the obstacle dodging technique, [described in section four](#), or go through them slowly. Look for sunken service covers, sewer grates and potholes.



Loose or slippery surfaces can spill you. Go over them slowly and corner carefully, keeping the bicycle as upright as possible. Specifically, watch for sand, gravel, mud, dirt, oil, water, fallen leaves and freshly painted lines.

Raised surfaces can buckle wheels and throw you out of control. Use the obstacle dodging technique to avoid them, or take them slowly and carefully. Look out for raised service covers, sewer grates, tracks, speed bumps, stones, driveway entrances, raised lane markers and reflectors.

Sharp objects cut or puncture tires, sometimes causing blowouts that result in spills or crashes. Watch for nails, tacks, glass, staples, wire, pins, sharp rocks and sharp pieces of metal.

When a tire goes flat, slow down gently to a stop, then walk your bike to avoid spills, and ruined tires and rims. Be prepared. Flat tires are a common bicycle problem. Carry a spare tube, tire irons, pump and repair kit.

Riding on Sidewalks

Sidewalk cycling is very dangerous. Many collisions between cyclists and motor vehicles occur where sidewalks, driveways and parking lot access become unexpected intersections. Make sure you know and obey your local by-laws concerning sidewalk riding.

Cyclists are also at danger whenever they come off a sidewalk onto the road. A bicyclist is not permitted to ride in pedestrian crosswalk or crossover. Walk your bike across.

When riding on shared bike/walking paths, ride at a slow speed, yield to pedestrians and when approaching pedestrians from behind, signal your approach by using your bell well in advance.

Be Seen and Heard

Because bicycles are one of the smallest vehicles on the road, it is important for cyclists to be as visible as possible to other road users at all times. This means wearing white or bright coloured clothing when you ride. A white or yellow helmet (particularly one with reflective material on it) also helps to make you more visible.

Like driving, cycling requires your full attention. Avoid using a portable music player, headphones and a cell phone when riding.

Lighting

By law your bicycle must have a white front light and a red rear light or reflector when you ride one-half hour before sunset and one-half hour after sunrise. As well, the law requires white reflective strips on the front forks and red reflective strips on the rear stays.

Clothing can improve or reduce visibility. Yellow and white stand out best at night; dark colours are difficult to see. Pedal reflectors, reflective bands on wrists make your hand signals more visible. Reflective bands on your ankles or heels, clothes and helmet help others see you.

Dawn and dusk

Dawn and dusk are especially dangerous times to ride. When the sun is very low, light comes directly into your eyes and the eyes of motorists, causing short periods of blindness. Sunglasses, especially polarized ones, help.

When riding directly into or away from the sun at this time, leave extra room and be ready for sudden stops or swerves by traffic around you. Be particularly alert at intersections and scan carefully.

Be Heard

Bicycles are very quiet vehicles, so it is important to warn others of your approach. This includes motorists, as well as other cyclists, pedestrians, in-line skaters, joggers, and others.

By law all bikes must have a working bell or horn to announce your approach. At times it is just as effective and more courteous to shout something like "passing on the left" when overtaking other cyclists and pedestrians. This is particularly important when using shared recreation pathways.

Cycling in Rural Areas

Cycling in rural areas or touring can be one of the most pleasant and exhilarating cycling experiences. Aside from practising the same safe riding habits as when riding in city areas, there are certain precautions to take and hazards to be aware of to help ensure a safe and smooth trip.

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The Ministry of Transportation acknowledges Velo Ontario, the City of Toronto, Urban Development Services and the Toronto City Cycling Committee for their contribution towards this publication.

To order *Cycling Skills* or the *Young Cyclist's Guide*, please contact the Ministry of Transportation Distribution Centre at 1-800-373-5099.

For information on the [Highway Traffic Act](#), Statutes and Regulations of Ontario, visit www.e-laws.gov.on.ca

For more information on safe cycling and cycling activities visit:

Toronto Cycling Committee	www.toronto.ca/cycling
Cycle Ontario Alliance	www.cycleontario.ca
Ontario Cycling Association	www.ontariocycling.org
Cycle Canada	www.cyclecanada.com
Citizens for Safe Cycling	www.safecycling.ca