

Cycling Skills

Ontario's Guide to
Safe Cycling



Introduction



Cycling can be enjoyed safely when you understand the rules of the road and practise proper safety and handling techniques.

This is your guide to cycling safety. Whether you're new to cycling or you are an experienced cyclist, this guide contains important information, tips and techniques to make you a safe, confident rider.

You may also want to consider taking a **CAN-BIKE** cycling course to help boost your skills, safety and cycling pleasure. All CAN-BIKE instructors are fully accredited in CAN-BIKE, are knowledgeable about the Highway Traffic Act and have advanced cycling skills. Check with your local cycling organization or police service for course information.

The CAN-BIKE program is sponsored by the Canadian Cycling Association and is administered in Ontario by the Ontario Cycling Association. For more information about the CAN-BIKE program, contact:

The Ontario Cycling Association, 1185 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 408
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www.ontariocycling.org

Cycling is a fun, healthy activity and an inexpensive way to get around.

...be equipped
...know the rules
...watch for hazards
...ride responsibly

The Ministry of Transportation acknowledges the Ontario Cycling Association, the Ontario CAN-BIKE Committee, City of Toronto, City Planning and the Toronto Cycling Committee for their contribution towards this publication.

What's Inside

1. Safety Equipment
2. Handling Skills
3. Riding in Traffic
4. Obstacles and Road Surfaces
5. Cycling and The Law
6. What's New

1

Safety Equipment



Sizing Your Bike

There is a variety of bicycles on the market to choose from. Whether you're choosing a touring, sport, mountain or hybrid bicycle, it should fit properly, making it easy to control and comfortable to ride.

Check these important fitting points on your bicycle.

Frame Size

Frame size varies by type of bicycle, but as a general rule, you should be able to stand flat-footed over your bike's frame (top tube) with two to five centimetres of space. For a woman's frame bike, when sitting on the seat, the base of the seat should be at least five centimetres above the seat tube when the tips of both feet touch the ground.

Seat and Handlebar Height Adjustment

Seat - Positioning your seat properly will help make your pedalling more efficient and reduce strain on your knees. To ensure your seat is at the correct height, sit on the seat with the balls of your feet on the pedals.

At the bottom of the pedal stroke, your legs should be almost straight with your knees slightly bent.

Handlebars - In a normal riding position, your weight should be evenly balanced, allowing you to rest your hands lightly on the handlebars. You can adjust the tilt of your seat and the height of your handlebars to achieve a good balance of weight.

Your handlebar stem and seat post must be at least five centimetres into the frame. Both usually have a mark that indicates the maximum extension point. Longer seat posts and stems are available if you need them.

Safety Check

Every cyclist needs to know how to tell when their bicycle is unsafe to ride and needs repair. This section includes a basic bicycle safety checklist.



Basic Bicycle Safety Checklist:

- **Bolts/Quick release levers** – Check that bolts and/or quick release levers on the seat, seat post, handlebar stem and axles are tight.
- **Headset** – Check that it turns freely and doesn't rattle.
- **Brakes** – Check that the nuts on the brakes are tight. Brake pads should not touch the rims unless you are squeezing the brakes. Brake levers should stop at least 2.5 centimetres from the handlebars when the brakes are fully applied.
- **Axles** – Check bearings for looseness by shaking the wheel side to side. Make sure quick release levers are clamped tight.
- **Shift Levers** – Derailleur levers should move easily only when shifting. A screw or butterfly nut or similar device lets you adjust the movement of some types of shifter levers.
- **Derailleur Movement** – On derailleur bikes, try shifting through all your gears and make sure your derailleur does not throw the chain off the sprockets.

- **Tires** – Inflate to the recommended tire pressure as shown on the tire.
- **Spokes** – Check for and replace loose, bent or broken spokes.
- **Wheels** – Make sure wheels are centred in the forks and not touching the brake blocks. Check the rim for side-to-side wobbles and up and down hops by watching the wheel spin past the brakes or frame. More than half a centimetre of wobble is cause for concern.
- **Coaster Brakes** – Check that the bolt holding the brake arm to the frame clip is tight.
- **Helmet** – Make sure that your helmet meets safety standards (e.g. Snell, CSA, ANSI, ASTM, BSI, SAA, CPSC) and has not been damaged in a collision.

Keep your bike secure

- Always carry a quality bicycle lock when riding and always lock your bike and quick release items like your wheels and seat to something solid.



Wrong



Wrong

Helmets

An approved bicycle helmet can greatly reduce the risk of permanent injury or death in the event of a fall or collision. A helmet works by absorbing the forces of a crash, so if the helmet has been in a collision, it 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, CPSC and SAA.

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

To provide maximum protection, the helmet should fit level and square on your head. It should fit snugly and not slip when you move your head.

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

To check a proper fit:

- There should be two finger widths between your eyebrows and the helmet.
- The straps should be flat against the face.
- The side straps should meet just below the ear making a V-shape under your ear lobe.
- The chin strap should be fastened snugly with enough room to fit one finger between your chin and the strap.
- Use the sizing pads provided with the helmet to adjust the fit.



Right



Riding with children

Use care and caution when cycling with young children who are too young to ride themselves. Keep in mind that a bicycle child seat mounted behind the bicycle seat alters your centre of gravity while riding and may increase the risk of losing balance. Take extra caution when placing and removing the child from the carrier. Never leave your bike unattended when a child is in the carrier.

An alternative way to carry children is to use 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.

Children are required to wear an approved bicycle helmet when riding in a child carrier or a bicycle trailer.

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.

Lighting - By law your bicycle must have a white front light and a red rear light or reflector when you ride between 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

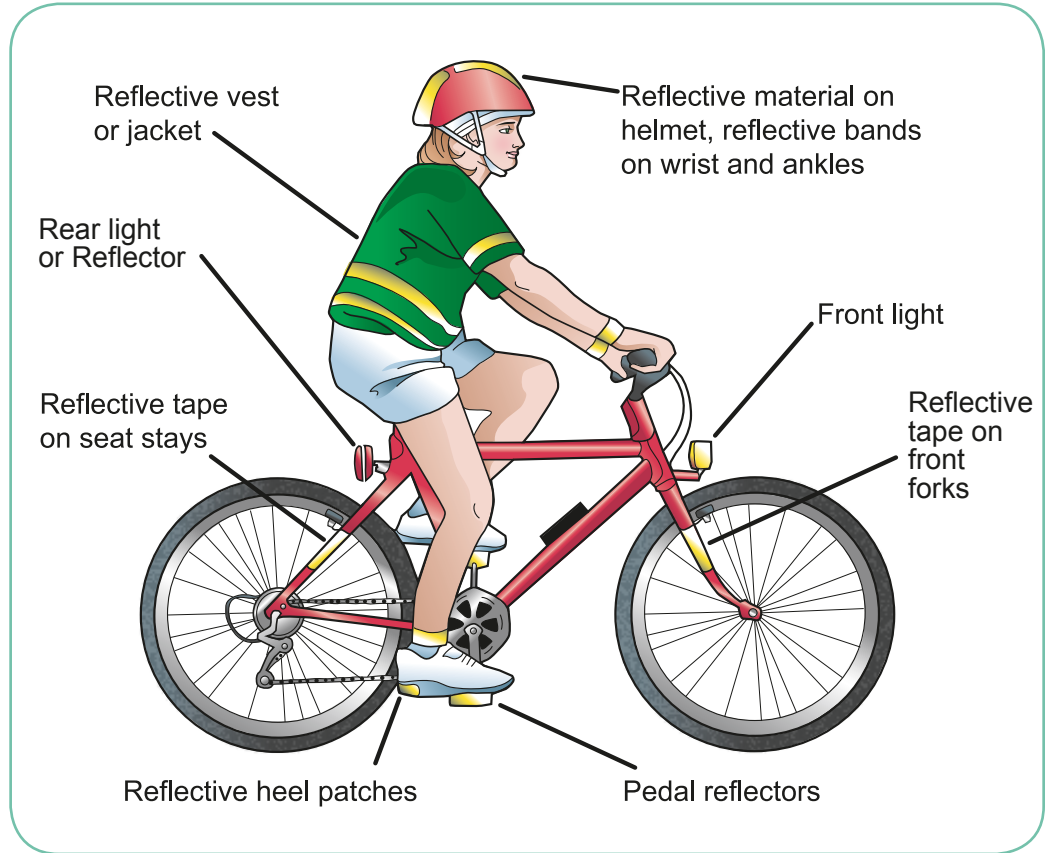
Clothing can improve or reduce visibility. Yellow and white stand out best at night; dark colours are difficult to see. Pedal reflectors and reflective material on wrists, ankles, heels, clothing and helmets help others see you.

Dawn and dusk

When riding directly into or away from the sun at these times, 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 other cyclists and pedestrians of your approach. 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.



2

Handling Skills



Selecting the right gear

Handling skills are easier to learn in a low easy gear where the legs can rotate quickly. Fast leg rotation provides better balance, less fatigue and more speed. It also reduces knee strain.

Shifting gears

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.
- Avoid pedalling slowly and pushing hard in your highest gears.

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. 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. It's also important to practise shoulder checking before signalling to make turns.

Sequence practice

Practise shoulder checking before signalling to make turns. Practise shoulder checking, signalling and shoulder checking again before moving, when changing lanes or position within a lane.

Emergency handling skills

The first step in collision prevention is to scan the road ahead for potential hazards. Steer clear of debris and holes in the pavement, and learn to anticipate errors by motorists, pedestrians and other cyclists. Don't assume they see you. No matter how skilled or careful a rider you are, you will encounter hazards that leave you little time to react.

Braking

Quick stops can be crucial in an emergency. Caution is required when braking quickly to ensure you don't flip over your handlebars. Keep a space cushion around your bike to ensure you have time to react and stop safely. In wet weather, it takes longer to stop, so be sure to leave more room.



Left Turn

Left arm out

Right Turn

Left arm out, up



Hand Signals

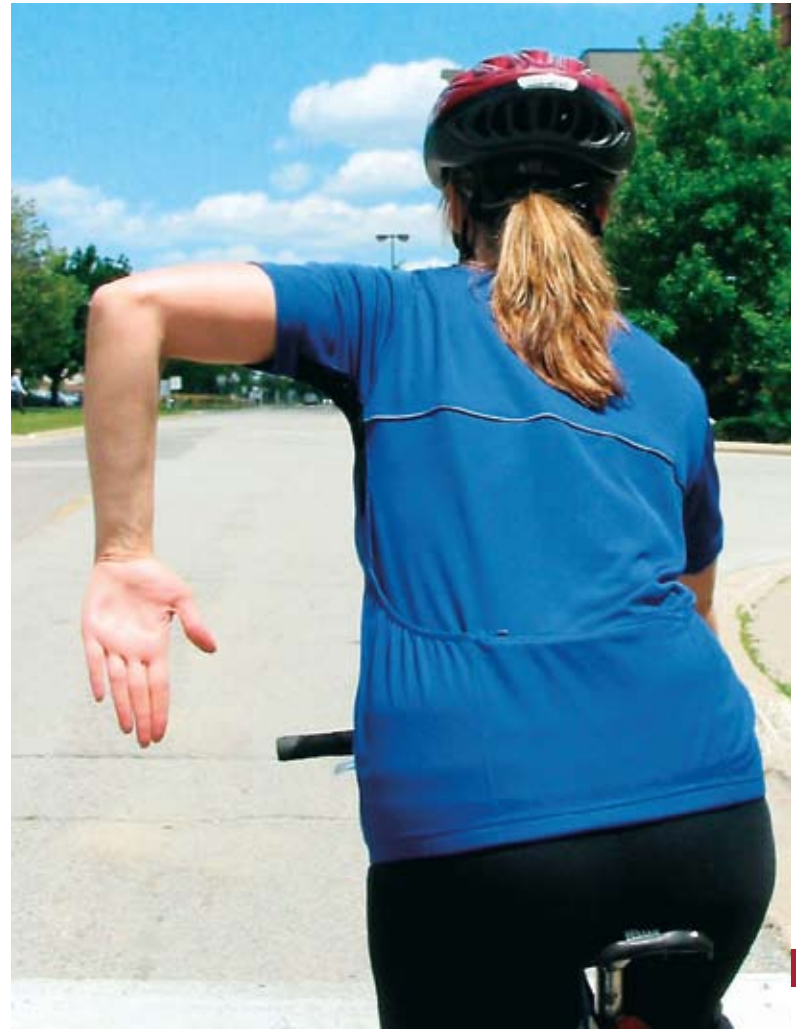


Alternative Right Turn

Right arm out

Stop

Left arm out, down, palm back



3

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 riding with other traffic. This is only safe when all traffic uses the same rules of the road.

When everyone follows the same 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.

Where do you ride?

Because bicycles usually travel at a lower speed, 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**

Accordingly, cyclists should ride one meter from the curb or close to the right hand edge of the road when there is no curb, unless they are turning left, going faster than other vehicles or if the lane is too narrow to share.

Check for local regulations that affect where you may cycle in your municipality. Bicycles are prohibited on some provincial highways.

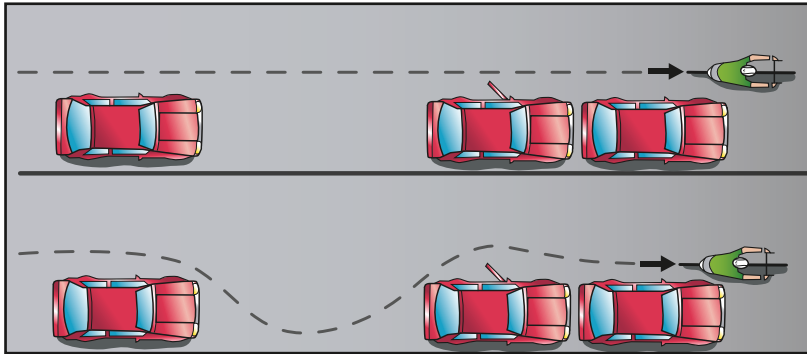
Going straight ahead

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.

Around parked vehicles

Ride in a straight line at least one metre away from parked vehicles. Keep to this line even if the vehicles are far apart to avoid continuous swerving.

YES



NO

When riding around parked vehicles, cyclists should watch for motorists and passengers who may open their car door into the cyclists' path.

Which lane?

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



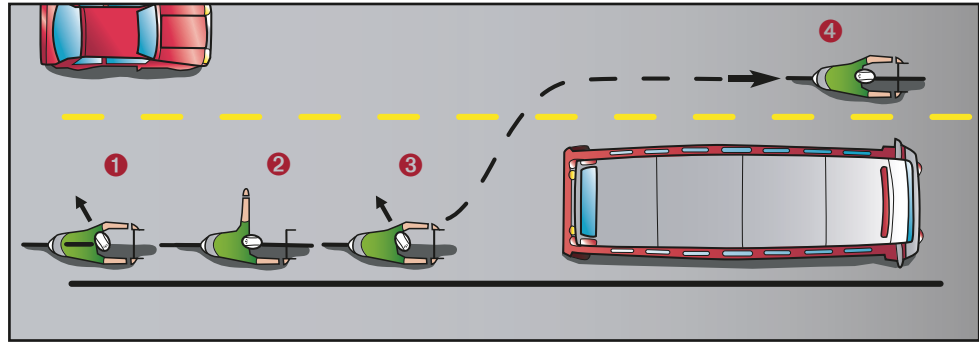


Taking a lane

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. On high-speed roads, it is not safe to take the whole lane. To move left in a lane, shoulder check, signal left and shoulder check again then move to the centre of the lane when it is safe to do so.

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. Always shoulder check, signal and shoulder check again before changing lanes.

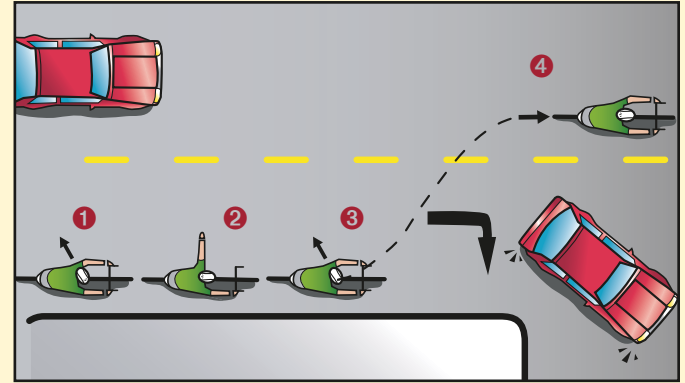


1. Shoulder check 2. Signal lane change 3. Shoulder check again 4. Change lanes.

Right-turning traffic

Motorists don't always check for bicycles when making right-hand turns, so cyclists need to take extra caution. It's important to leave space around you for a safety cushion (one meter between you and the curb and you and the vehicle).

When a motorist is making a right-hand turn, cyclists can either stay behind the vehicle or pass the right-turning vehicle on the left by shoulder checking, signalling, shoulder checking again and then passing on the left. Never pass a right-turning vehicle on the right.

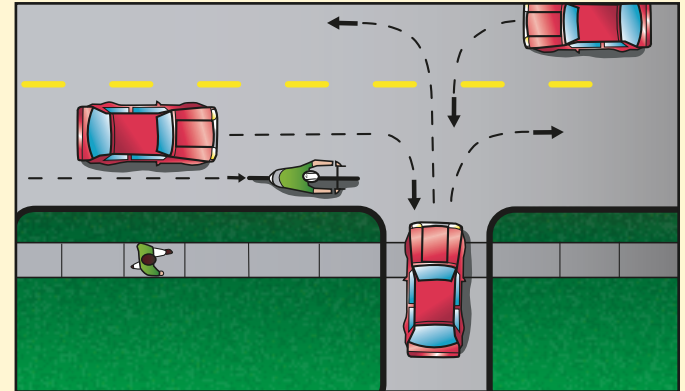


1. Shoulder check
2. Signal
3. Shoulder check again
4. Go when it is safe to do so.

Going through intersections

Intersections are 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.

At intersections, it is usually better to take the lane before the intersection so that right-turning motorists stay behind you.





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.

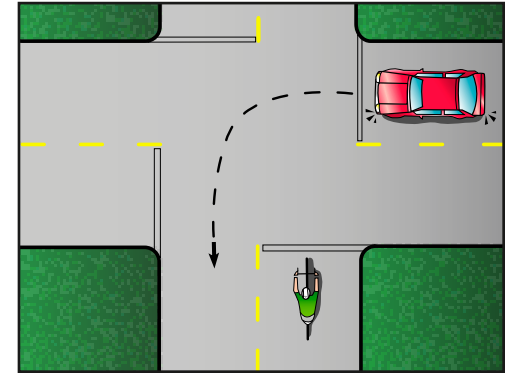
The following outlines the right-of-way at intersections with and without traffic controls.

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. Putting your foot on the ground indicates you are stopping and yielding.



Vehicle on the right goes first

Moving through traffic signal intersections

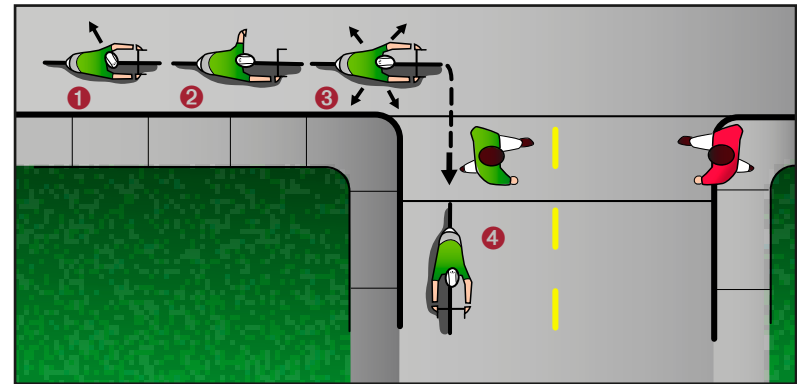
There are two rules for safely crossing intersections:

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 in the intersection.

Right turns

To make a right-hand 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.

Keep in mind, cars may move into the bike lane or to the right side of your lane prior to making a right turn. Stay behind or pass on the left. Never pass a right-turning car on the right side.



1. Shoulder check
2. Signal
3. Scan
4. Turn when path is clear

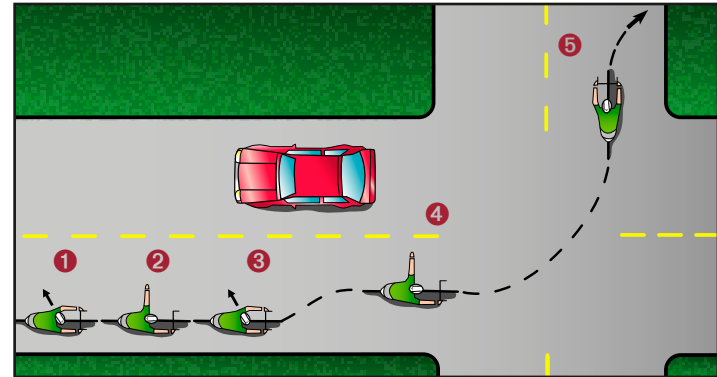


1. Shoulder check
2. Signal
3. Shoulder check again
4. Go to centre of lane, go when clear
5. Shoulder check, signal and return to right side of road.

Left turns

There are two basic ways to turn left at an intersection, depending on your cycling skills and the volume and speed of traffic.

- 1. Pedestrian turn** – Walk the bike across the pedestrian crosswalk.
- 2. Vehicular turn** – This is 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.



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.

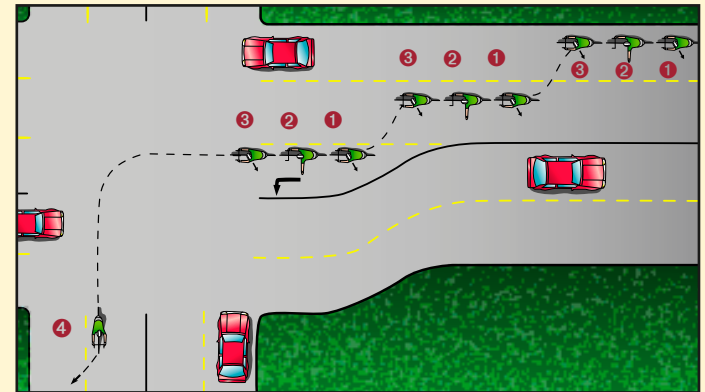
Dedicated turn lane - Move lane by lane to the dedicated turn lane using your lane-changing skills. Wait to turn at the centre of the left turn lane. Go when the oncoming traffic is clear and the traffic signal is green.

Multiple left turn lanes

When more than one left turn lane exists, use your lane-changing skills to move over lane by lane to get to the lane at the extreme left. 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.

Completing a left turn

Always complete your turn into the equivalent of the lane you turned from. Once the turn is complete, use your lane-changing skills to move over lane by lane to the right, as close to the curb as is appropriate for the road conditions.



1. Shoulder check 2. Signal 3. shoulder check again 4. Turn

Signs and traffic signals

Key traffic signs and signals for cyclists.



Bicycles are permitted on this road.



No bicycles allowed on this road.



Stop and wait until the way is clear before entering the intersection.



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.

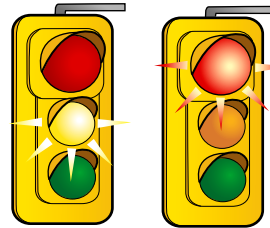


One-way road. Travel in direction of arrow.



These signs indicate 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.



Flashing yellow light:

Slow down and proceed with caution through intersection.

Flashing red light:

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

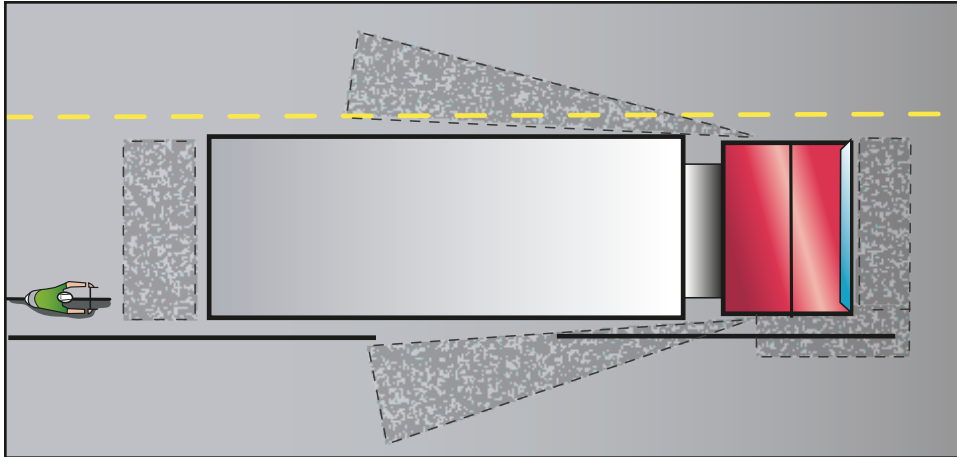
A flashing green light or left-pointing green arrow with a green light, permits you to turn left, go straight ahead or turn right from the proper lane. Oncoming traffic still faces a red light. Remember, during a power failure, intersection traffic lights will not work. Treat the intersection as an all-way 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. It is extremely important to stay out of the blind spots. Trucks and buses are wider than most passenger vehicles and occupy more space on the road, meaning cyclists should never share a lane with them. Always watch for trucks and buses that may make a right-hand turn in front of you.

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

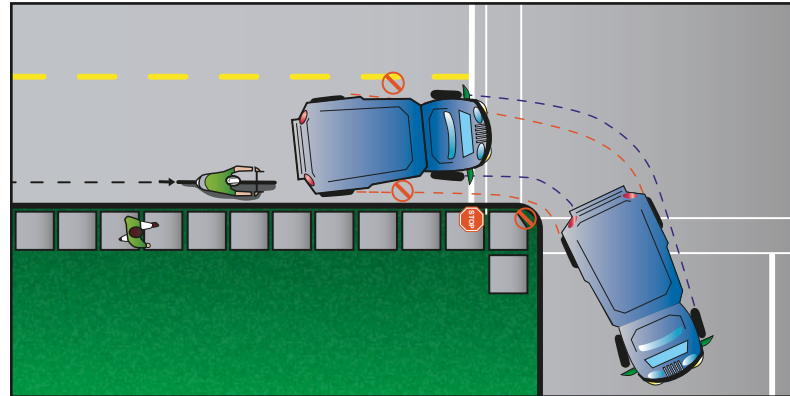




Trucks and turning

Cyclists need to take extra care when entering intersections with trucks. Trucks have large blind spots and may not be able to spot cyclists when making right-hand turns. An experienced truck driver will use lane closure (crowd the curb) to shut down the lane to bikes and small vehicles before making a right turn. They then must swing out away from the curb to allow the truck's rear wheels to complete the turn. Not all truck drivers practise this technique, so always take extra care and watch for right-turning trucks.

Position yourself in front or behind a truck near intersections. The experienced cyclist may choose to pass on the left in the passing lane. If you sit between the curb and a truck at an intersection, you lose the comfort space needed to get out of the way if the truck starts to turn.



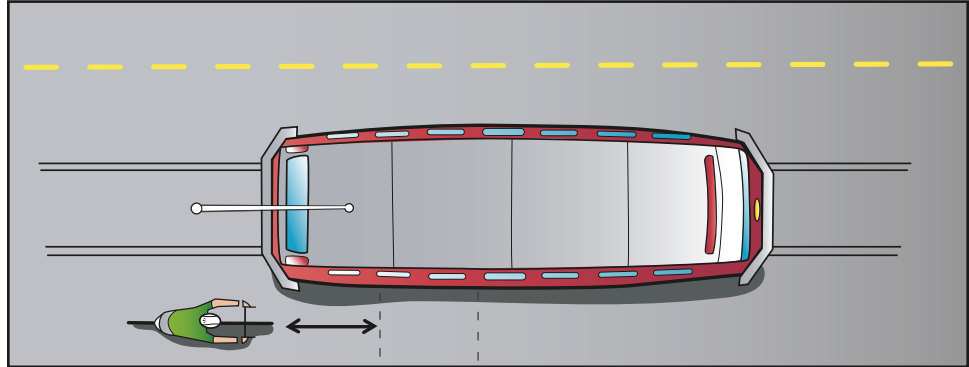
Truck safety tips

- Leave extra room when stopped behind a truck to prevent a “roll-back” collision. When a truck driver takes their foot off the brake to release the clutch, a heavy load can cause the truck to roll back.
- Trucks require a lot of space to stop. Always ensure there is a large distance between your bike and a truck before you pull in front.
- The length of a truck affects the driver’s visibility. If you’re riding behind a truck, stay far enough back so that the driver is better able to see you in the side-view mirror.
- Ride on the inside section of a bike lane when a truck is near you. If you’re sharing the road, ride far enough behind the truck so that you appear in its mirrors.
- At low speed and when starting from a stop bikes tend to wobble, which can contribute to your handlebars knocking into the vehicle beside you. Cyclists should gear down at stops to reduce the wobble effect at start-up.
- Do not rely on your bell, horn or voice to alert the truck driver of your presence. Respect the driver’s limitations and keep a safe distance away.
- Trucks passing cyclists can create a gust of wind powerful enough to throw the most experienced cyclist off balance. When you can anticipate a truck coming up on your side, stop pedalling and concentrate on keeping your front wheel straight.



Streetcars

By law, you must pass streetcars on the right. When they stop to pick up or let off passengers, you must stop two metres behind the rear door until all passengers have boarded and disembarked on the sidewalk.



School buses

When the upper red lights of a stopped school bus are flashing and the 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.

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 if charged, you could be subject to a fine of \$400 to \$2,000. This law applies on all roads and to all drivers, including bicyclists.

Travelling in groups

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

- **Ride in single file on two-lane roads or when traffic is heavy on multi-lane roads.**
- **Keep at least one metre apart from other cyclists in the group and keep several lengths apart when going downhill at high speed.**

If you are travelling in a large group, break up into smaller groups of about four to six. Keep about one kilometre between groups to allow traffic to pass.



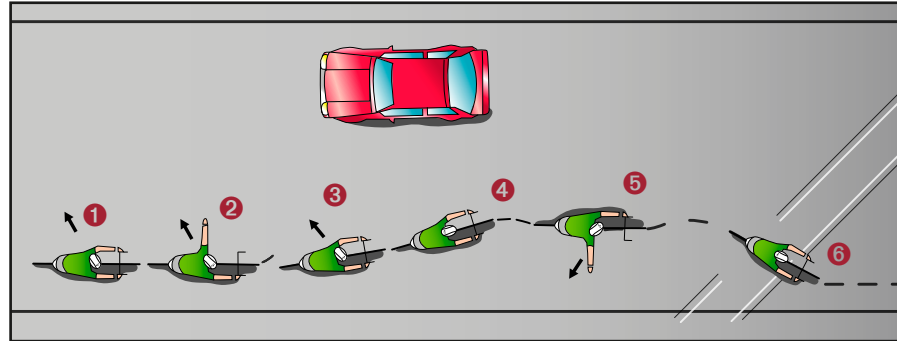
4 Obstacles & road surfaces



Railway and streetcar tracks

Railway and streetcar tracks are very dangerous. Crossing at the wrong angle could cause you to fall or damage your bicycle wheels. Remember, tracks are slippery when wet.

Always cross the tracks at right angles. 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.



1. Shoulder check 2. Signal 3. Shoulder check 4. Move left 5. Shoulder check, signal, shoulder check 6. Cross at right angle.

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

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.

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 or raised surfaces that can buckle wheels or throw the rider. Avoid them with gradual course changes and go through them slowly.

Loose or slippery surfaces that can cause you to lose control. Go over them slowly and corner carefully, keeping the bicycle as upright as possible.

Sharp objects that can 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.

If you get a flat tire, slow down gently to a stop and walk your bike to avoid ruining the tires and rims.





Riding on sidewalks and shared paths

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.

When riding on shared bike/walking paths cyclists should:

- Ride at a slow speed.
- Use your bell or horn to signal your presence when approaching pedestrians from behind.
- Be ready to stop and allow pedestrians to cross.
- Stop before every intersection and look all ways for cars.
- Watch for cars entering or exiting from driveways/laneways.
- Walk your bike across a crosswalk (it is illegal to ride across a crosswalk).

Weather hazards

Wet weather makes roads slippery and cyclists need to take extra caution when riding in wet conditions.

- **Braking**

Most bicycle brakes work poorly in the rain. If you have steel rims, ride slowly and allow extra time for braking. Brake hard only after your brakes start to grab. Aluminium and alloy rims provide the best wet weather braking.

- **Cornering**

You have less traction on wet roads, so corner slowly with little leaning.

- **Puddles**

Avoid puddles if possible, or go through them slowly.

- **Metal, paint and wood**

Metal plates, service covers, tracks and painted lines are all very slippery when wet. Slow down and corner carefully on all such surfaces.

- **Visibility**

Visibility can be poor in wet weather. Wear bright outer garments so that drivers can see you better.



5

Cycling & The Law



A bicycle is a vehicle under the Ontario Highway Traffic Act (HTA). This means that, as a bicyclist, you have the same rights and responsibilities to obey all traffic laws as other road users. Cyclists charged for disobeying traffic laws will be subject to a minimum set fine and a Victim Surcharge fine of \$20.00 for most offences (please note set fines below are subject to change).

The following are key sections of the HTA concerning cyclists.

HTA 144/136 -Traffic signals and signs - stop for red lights and stop signs and comply with all other signs. **Set fine: \$85.00**

HTA 153 - One ways streets - ride in the designated direction on one-way streets. **Set fine: \$85.00**

HTA 147 - Slow moving traffic travel on right side - 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 your safety warrants it. Never compromise your safety for the convenience of a motorist behind you. **Set fine: \$85.00**

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. **Set fine: \$85.00**

HTA 140/144(29) - Crosswalks - stop for pedestrians at crosswalks and walk your bike when crossing at a crosswalk.
Set fine: \$85.00

HTA 166 - Streetcars - stop two metres behind streetcar doors and wait until passengers have boarded or departed and reached the curb.
Set fine: \$85.00

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. **Set fine: \$400.**

HTA 62(17) – Lights – a bike must have a white front light and a red rear light or reflector if you ride between ½ hour before sunset and ½ hour after sunrise and white reflective tape on the front forks and red reflective tape on rear forks. **Set fine: \$20.00**

HTA 75 (5) – Bell – a bike must have a bell or horn in good working order. **Set fine: \$85.00**

HTA 64(3) – 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. **Set fine: \$85.00**

HTA 218 – Identification – Cyclists must stop and identify themselves when required to stop by police for breaking traffic laws. The police officer will ask you for your correct name and address. **Set fine: \$85.00**

HTA Reg. 630 – Expressways – Bicycles are prohibited on expressway/freeway highways such as the 400 series, the QEW, Ottawa Queensway and on roads where “No Bicycle” signs are posted.
Set fine: \$85.00

HTA 178(2) – Passengers – Passengers are not allowed on a bicycle designed for one person. **Set fine: \$85.00**

HTA 178(1) – Attaching to a vehicle – You are not permitted to attach yourself to the outside of another vehicle or streetcar for the purpose of “hitching a ride”. **Set fine: \$85.00**

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.
Set fine: \$60.00

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.
Set fine: \$35.00.

The following are not considered bicycles and are subject to different rules for use:

- Limited-speed motorcycles
- Motor-assisted bicycles (mopeds)
- Low-speed vehicles
- Electric and motorized scooters (go-peds)
- Pocket bikes
- Segway Human/Personal Transporter

For more information on the rules of use for these types of vehicles, please visit www.mto.gov.on.ca.

6

What's New



Ontario's e-bike pilot project

The province of Ontario is conducting a three-year pilot project to evaluate the use of power-assisted bicycles (also known as electric bikes or e-bikes) on roads and highways. The pilot is open to all Ontarians age 16 and older.

What is a powered-assisted bicycle (electric bike/e-bike)?

An e-bike is a bicycle with an added battery-powered electric motor that assists the rider in pedalling and increases the amount of power to the wheel. In some models, the motor can propel the bicycle without pedalling. E-bikes can also be driven like a conventional bicycle without any power assist. The power assist enables the rider to pedal with less effort, to climb hills and ride against the wind more easily. An e-bike is similar to a conventional bike in terms of size, weight, speed and the riding skills required.

Only e-bikes that conform to the federal definition of a power-assisted bicycle can be legally operated on public roads. To meet this definition, the e-bike must have:

- Operable pedals.
- An electric motor that cannot provide power assist at a speed greater than 32 km/hr and a power output that does not exceed 500 watts.
- A label affixed by the manufacturer that states in both English and French that the vehicle is a “power-assisted bicycle” as defined in the federal regulations.

During the three-year pilot project, e-bikes and their operators will be treated, for the most part, in the same manner as bicycles and bicyclists under the Highway Traffic Act. All e-bike operators must be 16 years of age and older, and must wear an approved bicycle helmet. Anyone failing to do so may be fined.



Sample manufacturer label



Electric bike photos courtesy of Juergen Weichert.

Traffic laws that apply to bicycles also apply to e-bikes. This means that e-bikes are not permitted to travel where bicycles are not allowed, such as controlled-access highways and municipal roads and sidewalks where by-laws do not permit bicycles. E-bikes must have a bell and front and rear lights when you ride between one-half hour before sunset and one-half hour after sunrise.

Operators of e-bikes are not required to hold a driver's licence, to have the e-bike registered or plated or to have motor vehicle insurance.

A photograph of four people (two men and two women) wearing bicycle helmets and standing with their bicycles in an outdoor setting. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The people are smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a fence and some trees.

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

**Road safety.
It starts
with you.**

For more information about cycling safety, contact:

MTO Info General Inquiry:
1-800-268-4686 or (416) 235-4686 in GTA

TTY Users:
1-866-471-8929 or (905) 704-2426 in Niagara

Website: www.mto.gov.on.ca

For more information on the Highway Traffic Act, Statutes and Regulations of Ontario, visit www.e-laws.gov.on.ca.