



Advancing Bicycle Access, Safety & Education

SHARE THE ROAD

Same Roads, Same Rights, Same Rules

Important Texas Traffic Laws for Cyclists and Motorists

Bicycle riders are operators of vehicles and have all the rights and responsibilities as the operators of other vehicles. It is important that all roadway users know and obey the laws that keep us all safe.

The more educated automobile drivers and bicyclists are, the safer we will all be out on the road. Please use the information on this sheet to help you and your friends tune-up your knowledge of the rules of the road.

Helmets:

Helmets are not required to be worn by state law in Texas. However, nine or more municipal areas do require at least some of the people to use helmets when they ride. Please use a helmet and make sure your children do as well.

Racing:

Texas law prohibits vehicles racing on public roads. There are specific allowances for sanctioned bicycle races that are approved by local law enforcement. At the extreme this means that those weekend city limit sprints are illegal.

Motorists:

Cyclists are vulnerable in traffic with motor vehicles. If you pass too closely to another automobile it may cause a crash and damage to both autos. If you pass too closely to a cyclist (within 3 feet) it may cause a crash and serious injury or death. Remember, the overtaking vehicle is responsible for passing safely.

The Texas Department of Public Safety created these Texas cycling laws for the Texas SuperCyclist Project. These Texas cycling laws are listed with reference to the Texas Transportation Code on the TBC website - www.biketexas.org.

Seven Basic Laws Pertaining to All Cyclists

1. One rider per saddle

You can't take a friend riding unless you have a bicycle built for two (tandem) or a child seat or trailer for the young ones. Riding on the handlebars, top bar or pegs is not allowed.

2. Ride as far to the right as practicable, in the same direction as other traffic

This is the law that causes the most confusion. "Practicable" does not mean "possible." Stay out of the gutter; leave yourself enough room to avoid hazards including parked cars with open doors.

A cyclist may ride in the middle of a lane (take the lane) that is less than 14 feet wide or is too narrow to safely share with a motor vehicle. Cyclists may ride two abreast when taking a lane on a multi-lane roadway.

Cyclists may ride two abreast but may not impede the normal and reasonable flow of traffic.

A cyclist should ride in the proper lane to make a turn or otherwise negotiate an intersection.

A cyclist may ride to the left side on a one-way roadway.

3. One hand on the handlebars, but two are safer

Riding with "no hands" is fancy but just one small rock or a pothole can make your front wheel swerve and cause a crash.

4. Obey all traffic signs and signals

You must stop and yield just as the motor vehicles do. Complaints about cyclists running "Stop" signs and red lights are the ones we most frequently hear from motorists.

5. Must have a white light in the front and a red rear reflector or red light to ride when it's dark

Reflectors are not enough. You must have a headlight that can be seen from 500 feet. This is primarily so you will be seen but also to help you see.

6. Must have effective brakes capable of making a braked wheel skid

If only one brake is working it should be on the back wheel to avoid pitching the rider over the handlebars.

7. Use hand and arm signals

Stopping or slowing, left turns and right turns must all be signaled. Texas allows pointing to the right to signal a right turn. The stopping signal is especially important when riding in a group of cyclists.

Texas Bicycle Coalition

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