

TerranearPMC Safety Share

Week of May 30, 2017 – Bicycle Safety

Many of our nations' cities have people riding their bicycles about town, darting in and out of traffic and challenging drivers for the right of way. In New York City, many companies hire messengers to deliver packages as an inexpensive and fast way to get documents and other items to businesses across town. This mode of delivery service may have its advantages, but make no mistake, for those that opt to be bicycle carriers, it can be a dangerous way to make a living.

It's generally faster to ride a bicycle on the street rather than walk, but you must be sure you're safely sharing the road with vehicles. Depending on your residence, your city may already be making an effort to improve cyclist safety; still, much of your safety depends on your own actions to protect yourself.



This picture shows a courier with no protective head gear and riding with, quite possibly, a false sense of security. Even though it is quite apparent that one wrong move by either him or a vehicle could result in a very serious accident. It is important that no matter how experienced you may think you are, you must ride with extreme care 100% of the time. Here are ten core rules to follow every time you start biking:

1. **Stay Protected:** Put on a helmet.
2. **Act Like a Car:** Drivers know how other drivers act; just because you can doesn't mean you should weave through different lanes. If you're predictable and check around for traffic, you will be much safer.
3. **Keep Visible:** If a car can see you, the driver is not as likely to accidentally hit you. If you must ride at night, wear reflective clothing and lights.
4. **Keep Focused:** Don't chat on the phone or wear headphones on a bicycle.
5. **Look, Signal, Look:** Use your hand signals to inform drivers where you intend to move next. Be sure to make eye contact as you signal, and watch before making your turn; never assume the driver will stop.
6. **Obey Traffic Laws:** This one goes hand-in-hand with acting like a car. Obey the same laws and signs as the car would.
7. **Avoid Obstacles:** As long as you're alert, you'll see obstacles ahead of time to avoid.
8. **Check Bike:** Is the bicycle properly comfortable and set up for your ride?
9. **Stay With Traffic:** If you will ride your bicycle like a car, you must move in the same direction. Moving against traffic will distract you and other drivers.



10. **Double-Check Bike:** Make sure your wheels and breaks are fine.

Avoid the Door Zone: You're generally allowed to use the entire road, so be sure to allow at least three feet of space when riding beside parked cars, even if there is traffic abundant. Never assume that a parked car is empty, and never assume the driver will first check for a cyclist prior to opening the door. Drivers who open the door into traffic without looking can be fined in most cities.

Yield to Pedestrians: Pedestrians have the right of way, and a bicycle is considered to be a vehicle. As a road vehicle, you're expected to follow traffic laws, which includes yielding to pedestrians. In a business district, avoid sidewalks. Obey all stop signs and all red lights. Wait for a green light. The walk signal is not intended to be used by cyclists; you must wait for a green light before moving on through the intersection. Ignoring traffic laws only creates perilous situations. Not yielding to a pedestrian may also result in a fine.

Stay Out of Blind Spots: Keep out of blind spots; buses, trucks and other oversized vehicles have particularly expansive blind spots, especially on the right side. Try not to overtake a large vehicle if you can avoid it. Always be visible to the drivers; remember, if you are unable to see the driver in the mirror, then the driver is not able to see you. The right hook in particular is dangerous; it is possible to get seriously injured when a large vehicle turns to the right while the driver cannot see you. Always be careful around an intersection.

Use Lighting and a Helmet: Check with your city's local laws on light usage for nighttime cycling-then make sure you have at least that minimum. Wear bright, reflective clothing and use lights to make sure you can see and be seen. A white light must be in the front, and a red light must be in the back. Your pedals and ankles in particular should have reflectors, though there's no limit to how many you can wear. Children are required to wear helmets, but any sensible cyclist will wear one.

Plan Your Route Ahead of Time: The parks and streets of your city likely offer separate paths and lanes for bicycles, kept out of traffic. Therefore, you can and should select a route that best utilizes your riding skill and makes you feel the most comfortable while riding. There are a few different ways to map out your route, starting with the familiar Google Maps options; depending on your city, there may also be official apps available for smartphones.

Check Your Ride: It's always important to maintain your bike to ensure it is always working correctly and is in good condition. As a part of this, you'll need to give it a full examination prior to starting your route. If anything isn't working as it should, don't ride the bike; if you're renting, switch out for a different one. Such things include adjusting the seat height, making sure your tires are properly inflated, and making sure the wheels can spin without coming into friction contact with the brake pads. It is also important to check tires for bubbles, cuts or any other blemishes where air could escape. Finally, be sure to squeeze the levers for the brakes; they should be firm and strong, indicating they're functional.

There is no pill, no drug that can do for you what one hour of exercise can

Greg LeMond (First American to win the Tour de France)

