



## TIPS FOR MOTORISTS

### SHARING THE ROAD WITH CYCLISTS

**Look and notice** -- As motorists, we're conditioned to watch for large objects, such as vans and tractor trailers. Make a conscious effort to notice cyclists and pedestrians until it becomes second nature to you.

**Share the lane** -- Don't assume cyclists should hug the edge of the roadway. It's safest for cyclists to stay on a predictable course about 3-4 feet from the curb or parked cars. This allows them space to avoid road hazards and to be more visible.

#### When you pass --

- **If it's not safe, don't pass** -- On curving, narrow roads you should slow down and remain behind the cyclist until you can see far enough down the left-hand lane to pull out and clear the cyclist safely. Be aware that when a road is too narrow for cars and bikes to ride safely side by side, bicyclists should ride in or near the center of the lane to discourage motorists from trying to pass.
- **Keep clear by at least 3 feet** -- Remember, a gust of wind, an obstacle in front of the bike, a car-door suddenly opening, or other unexpected events can cause a cyclist to need to swerve. Clearance of 3 feet is considered the minimum safe separation between car and bike.
- **Check after passing.** Check over your shoulder to make sure you have allowed adequate distance before merging back in or attempting a right hand turn. Experienced bicyclists can ride 20-30 mph so they may be closer than you think.

**Don't take offense** -- most cyclists, just like most motorists, are not there to inconvenience other users of the roadway. Cyclists have a right to use the road; even on roads with bike lanes, they can legitimately need other lanes in preparation for turns or to pass obstructions. We all need to share the road.

Needless to say, this is not official legal advice -- it's a list of things that some experienced users of the road have found important. For the exact wording of applicable laws and many other analyses of the matter, visit [BIKEITHACA.ORG](http://BIKEITHACA.ORG)



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### SHARING THE ROAD WITH MOTORISTS

**Look and anticipate** -- As cyclists, we're inherently less visible than the cars and larger vehicles that motorists habitually notice and respond to. So, we need to ride in a way that we can be safe even if we aren't seen. E.g., don't squeeze to the right of cars where they can't see you and would hit you if they turn right.

#### Act like a vehicle --

- **Share the lane** -- Cyclists are not only entitled to use the lane, that's where they belong in order to be visible and predictable -- the two most important elements of safety in traffic. Experts suggests you ride at least three feet from the edge of the lane or, if there are parked cars, about that distance from the cars (and stay on that line even past spaces without cars).
- **Follow lane positioning rules** -- Always ride in the same direction as traffic; use the lane furthest to the right going in your direction; slower moving cyclists and motorists stay to the right.
- **Obey traffic laws** -- The same laws that apply to motorists apply to cyclists. Obey all traffic signs and signals and signal your turns so others can know your intentions. At night, be sure you have a bright white headlight and red tail light as well as reflective bits on as much of you as possible.

**Be conscious of how you are perceived** -- Be aware that motorists, just like cyclists, can get very impatient following slowly behind another vehicle if they think it is needlessly detaining them. You do have the right to be using the roadway, but try to pull off now and then to give motorists an opportunity to pass. If you are riding side by side with other cyclists where it would be safe for a motorist to pass, quickly form a single file to let cars pass; it's a perfect sharing situation and the less irritation is engendered in traffic, the safer we all are. We all need to share the road.

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