



SHARING THE ROAD SAFELY



New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee
Eliot Spitzer, Governor • David J. Swarts, DMV Commissioner & Chair

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IN NEW YORK STATE

A traffic safety guide concerning bicyclists, in-line skaters, pedestrians, non-motorized scooter operators, motorcyclists and motorists.



- Use caution at intersections. A motorist's unexpected turn into a cyclist's travel lane is a common cause of bike-motor vehicle crashes.
- Motorists should use eye contact to acknowledge the presence of a bicyclist or in-line skater who has stopped at an intersection or a pedestrian who is waiting to cross the street. Yield to them when appropriate.

For additional information, please contact the
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GOVERNOR'S TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
www.safeny.com

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
www.dot.state.ny.us

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF INJURY PREVENTION
www.health.state.ny.us

CORNELL UNIVERSITY 4-H BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN
TRAFFIC SAFETY PROJECT
www.bike.cornell.edu/HOME.htm

PARKS AND TRAILS NEW YORK
www.ptny.org

- When passing by a bicyclist or in-line skater, 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 20-25 m.p.h. and may be closer than you think.
- When driving on curving, narrow roads you should slow down and remain behind the bicyclist or in-line skater until you can see far enough down the left-hand lane to pull out and clear the bicyclist safely.
- Be aware that when a road is too narrow for cars and bikes to ride safely side by side, bicyclists and in-line skaters should ride in or near the center of the lane to discourage motorists from trying to pass them.
- Some roads have bike or in-line skate lanes along side them. Bicyclists and in-line skaters are required to use these lanes, but may enter into a vehicle's lane in order to execute a left turn or to avoid a hazard.

This brochure features the rules of the road and traffic safety tips for bicyclists, in-line skaters, pedestrians, non-motorized scooter operators, motorcyclists and motorists traveling on public highways and streets in New York State. Every motorist and highway user should obey the traffic laws and share the road with courtesy and safety.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Which traffic laws apply to bicyclists, in-line skaters, and non-motorized scooter operators.



A. These roadway users must obey, and are protected by, the same laws that apply to drivers, with some obvious exceptions and rules. Likewise, motorists must obey the rules of the road with respect to bicyclists and in-line skaters, and operators of non-motorized scooters.



Bicyclists, in-line skaters and non-motorized scooter operators under the age of 14 are required by law to wear an approved safety helmet.

Bicyclists and in-line skaters must obey all traffic signals, signs and pavement markings. Bicyclists must also signal for turns whether riding on a roadway, bike lane or bike path.

Violators to traffic laws may receive traffic tickets.

Parents can be held responsible for traffic safety violations by their minor children.



- Don't blast your vehicle's horn when approaching another highway user that you share the road with. It may be acceptable to sound your horn from several hundred feet back if the bicyclist, in-line skater, pedestrian or non-motorized scooter operator appears unaware of your approach.
- Never assume bicyclists will position themselves on the road as far to the right as possible. Experienced bicyclists often ride in the center of the traffic lane as much as three to four feet from the curb or a row of parked cars. This allows them room, and time, to avoid road hazards. It also helps them become more easily noticed by other bicyclists, pedestrians, in-line skaters and non-motorized scooter operators, and motorists.
- Allow plenty of space when passing a bicyclist or skater. Just as the wind produced by a passing tractor-trailer can pull a car off course, so too can a passing car cause a bicyclist or in-line skater to swerve out of control.

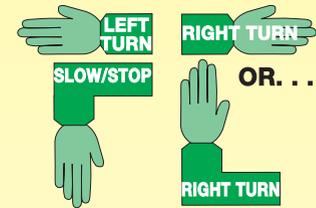
Tips for Motorists – Sharing the Road with Bicyclists, In-Line Skaters, Pedestrians, Non-Motorized Scooter Operators and Motorcyclists

Every motorist has a responsibility in making the road safe, especially when sharing the road.

- At intersections, be alert for pedestrians, particularly children and seniors, approaching from the opposite direction. Children often unexpectedly run into the road.
- Watch for bicyclists, in-line skaters, pedestrians, motorcyclists, and non-motorized scooter operators at night and along rural roads.
- **SPEED KILLS!** Obey the speed limit, especially in residential neighborhoods and school zones. A speeding motor vehicle is a serious risk to the safety of bicyclists, in-line skaters, pedestrians and non-motorized scooter operators.
- Look for a bicyclist, in-line skater, pedestrian, or non-motorized scooter operator to be near every intersection and driveway. Expect to find them suddenly alongside your lane of traffic and on your roadway.

Q. What signals must bicyclists use for turns and stops?

- A. The signals required of bicyclists are shown to the right. Note the alternate



signal for a right turn. If you use your left arm for a right turn signal, bend it up at the elbow. This will be more easily recognized as a turn signal than simply extending your arm straight up.

Q. On what roads are bicycling and in-line skating permitted?

- A. Bicyclists and in-line skaters have the legal right to share the road on most public roadways, but they are prohibited on interstate highways and expressways. In addition, authorities with jurisdiction over other controlled-access highways may prohibit bicycles.

Q. Must bicyclists and in-line skaters ride with traffic?

- A.** The law requires that bicyclists ride and in-line skaters glide **WITH** traffic. Bicycling and skating against traffic are leading causes of crashes. Moving with traffic makes bicyclists and in-line skaters more visible, and their movements more predictable to motorists. Riding or gliding with traffic also prevents interference with the flow of traffic and pedestrians.

Q. Where on the road may a bicyclist ride and an in-line skater glide?

- A.** Where bicycle or in-line skating lanes are available, bicyclists and skaters must use them. If there is no lane or it is unusable due to parked cars or other hazards, bicyclists and skaters may use the right shoulder on the area near the right edge or curb of the roadway. Bicyclists and skaters may move further left to avoid hazards or turn left, but they must avoid undue interference with other traffic.

Q. How can I become more aware of motorcyclists?

- A.** Respect the rights of and dangers faced by a motorcyclist: The motorcycle is a vehicle with all of the privileges of any vehicle on the roadway. Give the motorcyclist a full lane of travel.

LOOK OUT: Expect a motorcyclist to be present at every intersection. There may be a motorcyclist going straight ahead where you want to turn. On the highway, a motorcyclist may already be attempting to change lanes before you start to change your own lane. Before you make a turn or change lanes, look around for a motorcyclist. Be sure to clearly signal your intentions.

Anticipate a motorcyclist's maneuver: Obstructions and road conditions that you would not notice may be deadly for a motorcyclist. Expect the motorcyclist to avoid them with abrupt changes in speed or lane position.

Allow plenty of space: Don't follow a motorcycle closely. Allow room for the motorcyclist to take evasive actions to avoid collision or in reaction to a change in driving conditions.

SHARING THE ROAD WITH MOTORCYCLISTS

Q. Why didn't I see that approaching motorcycle?

- A.** Automobile and truck drivers tend to look out for cars and trucks, not motorcycles. The smaller profile of a motorcycle makes it harder to notice, and other drivers find it difficult to estimate an approaching motorcycle's speed.



A motorcyclist's riding pattern is different from how other drivers operate under the same driving condition or highway situation.



Traffic, weather, and road surface conditions require a motorcyclist to drive or react in ways unfamiliar to other drivers. This can make it difficult for them to predict a corrective or evasive action that a motorcyclist may have to take.

A bicycle or in-line skating path is separate from a roadway, and a bicyclist or in-line skater may use either. In some cases, a roadway may be safer than a nearby bicycle or in-line skating path, as well as more convenient.



Q. May bicyclists and in-line skaters travel side-by-side on a roadway?

- A.** Yes. They may ride two abreast on roadways, but they must ride or skate single file when being overtaken by other vehicles. Bicyclists and in-line skaters may travel more than two abreast on a shoulder, lane or path intended for bicycling and skating use *only* if there is sufficient space. However, they must be single file when passing parked or moving vehicles, pedestrians and other bicyclists or in-line skaters.

Q. How should a bicyclist and in-line skater prepare for turns at intersections?

- A.** Generally, bicyclists and in-line skaters should use the same through or turning lanes as motorists.

However, a bicyclist or in-line skater may choose to dismount and use the pedestrian crosswalk, especially in heavy traffic. After crossing at an intersection, bicyclists and skaters should move to a usable right-hand shoulder or to the right side of the right-hand lane.

The position a bicyclist or in-line skater takes in preparing for a turn is governed by the turning rules that apply to other traffic. Bicyclists and skaters should move to the center of the lane when preparing for either a right or left turn in order to prevent motorists from sharing the lane. It can be dangerous for a bicyclist or in-line skater to turn while sharing a lane with a motorist.

If there is more than one left turn lane, use the one furthest to the right. After any left turn, move to the right as soon as it is safe to do so.

Pedestrians are required to use sidewalks where they are provided and safe to use. When sidewalks are not provided, a pedestrian is required to walk on the left side of the roadway **FACING** traffic.

In-line skaters and bicyclists are required to come to a full stop before entering a roadway from any private road, driveway, alley or curb, and should always yield to pedestrians.

Some localities prohibit bicycling on sidewalks. Please familiarize yourself with local rules of the road and follow them.



Q. Which laws govern crosswalks?

- A.** When there is no traffic control signal, motorists must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians in a crosswalk.



Every driver approaching an intersection or crosswalk must yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian accompanied by a guide dog or using a cane.

Q. Is a motorist required to treat bicyclists and in-line skaters any differently than a motorist?

- A.** The motorist must always remember that bicyclists and in-line skaters have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers of motor vehicles, and motorists are required to exercise “due care” to avoid colliding with bicyclists and in-line skaters. As a safety measure, motorists should make scanning for bicyclists and in-line skaters second nature, and give them plenty of clearance when passing them and the right-of-way when appropriate.

Q. What if there isn't a crosswalk?

- A.** If there isn't a crosswalk, sign or signal at mid-block locations, a pedestrian must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles on the roadway.



Q. What about sidewalks?

- A.** The driver of a vehicle, when entering or exiting from an alleyway, building, private road or driveway must yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian on a sidewalk.

Q. Does the law require helmet use?

- A. Bicyclists, In-line skaters and non-motorized scooter operators under 14 years old are required to wear safety certified bicycle helmets.



Helmets must be certified by the Snell Memorial Foundation or the American National Standards Institute.

Children 1 to 4 years old must wear certified bicycle helmets and ride in specially designed child safety seats. Children under 1 year old are prohibited from being transported on a bicycle.

Any parent or guardian who permits his or her child to violate the helmet law is subject to a fine of up to \$50.

Children should be careful to take their helmets off once they stop riding or skating. Helmet straps may choke or seriously injure children if they wear helmets while playing.

For in-line skaters, the law states:

- In-line skaters are prohibited from carrying any package, bundle or article that obstructs their vision in any direction.
- In-line skaters should not skate or glide outside from 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise unless they are wearing an outer jacket or other clothing made of laminated or reflective material that is a light or bright color. Wearing bright colors when walking at dusk or dawn and carrying a flashlight are also good safety precautions for pedestrians to follow.

Q. Which traffic laws apply to pedestrians?



- A. Pedestrians must obey traffic control signals, signs and pavement markings when they are crossing a street.

Pedestrians are not allowed on expressways or interstate highways.

Q. What other laws apply to bicyclists and skaters?

A. For bicyclists, the law requires that you:

- Report a bicycle crash that involves death or serious injury to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles within 10 days of the incident. Use a bicycle report (MV-104C). If a motor vehicle was involved, use a motor vehicle accident report (MV-104). Forms are available at all DMV offices. Parents must file on behalf of minor children.
- Sit on the bike seat, not the fender or handlebars. Keep feet on the pedals, and never carry more people on the bike than the number for which it was designed.
- Keep at least one hand on the handlebar at all times.
- Never attach yourself or your bike to another vehicle on the roadway.
- Never drive a bicycle with a motor attached on any public highway.
- Never wear more than one earphone attached to a radio, tape player or other audio device.

Certain communities in New York State have passed local ordinances regarding helmet use for bicyclists. For example, Rockland and Erie Counties require all people riding bicycles on county property, regardless of age, to wear an approved bicycle helmet.

Every bicyclist, in-line skater, and non-motorized scooter operator, regardless of age, should wear an approved helmet. Helmets significantly reduce the risk of sustaining a serious head injury.



A helmet should fit squarely on top of the head in a level position and cover the top of the forehead extending down to about an inch above the eyebrows.

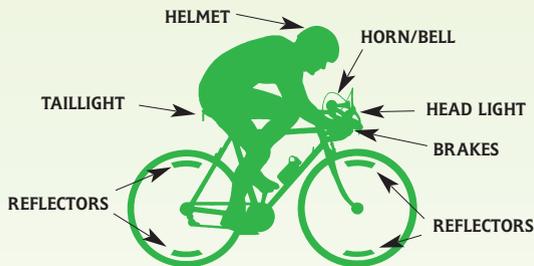
The helmet should not be able to slide back and forth on the head or rock from side to side.

In the event of a crash, helmets should be replaced immediately, even if there is no apparent damage.

Q. What equipment is required on bicycles?

A. A bicycle must be equipped with:

- A brake that is capable of making the bike tires skid on dry level pavement.
- A bell, horn or other device that can be heard at least 100 feet away. Sirens and whistles are not permitted.
- Bicycles driven between 1/2 hour after sunset and 1/2 hour before sunrise must be equipped with a white front headlight that is visible in darkness for at least 500 feet, and a red taillight visible for at least 300 feet.
- Any bicycle driven at night must have reflective tires, or wide-angle, spoke-mounted reflectors. Reflectors must be colorless or amber for front wheels, and colorless or red for rear wheels.



Q. Are there any equipment requirements for in-line skating?



A. In-line skate manufacturers are required to put warning labels on

skates urging users to wear protective gear and to equip skates with stopping devices. Retailers who sell in-line skates are also required to sell protective gear such as helmets, elbow and knee pads and wrist guards.

Manufacturers or retailers who don't comply can be fined as much as \$500.