

General Bicycle Rules On The Street

GENERAL RULES ON THE STREETS -

A person riding a bicycle on the street or highway has all the rights and is subject to all the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle, including DUI, obeying traffic signals, and all rules of the road. The California Vehicle Code (beginning with VC 21200), defines the rules and responsibilities of cyclists. You will find complete bicycle related vehicle codes at <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/vctop/vc/vctoc.htm>. Scroll down to Division 11, Chapter 1, Article 4: Operation of Bicycles

expecting to see you in this situation and may not have time to stop.

RIDE ON THE RIGHT SIDE - Because all vehicles operate on the right side, when drivers enter a road, change or cross lanes, by habit they look that way for possible conflicts, and often will not see someone coming from the wrong direction. Surprising motor vehicle drivers is never a good idea. Wrong-way riding is one of the leading causes of crashes, accounting for 15 to 20% of all collisions with cars. RIDING WITH TRAFFIC makes you more visible and predictable to other street users.



Bicyclists are required by California law to stop at STOP signs.

ENTER THE STREET IN A PREDICTABLE

WAY - Enter the street in a way that makes you visible to other users and yields right of way appropriately. Do not dart out into the street from a driveway, from the sidewalk, or from behind a parked car. Drivers are not



Cyclist behind the car, going the wrong way.



SIMPLY OBEYING THE LAWS AND FOLLOWING THE RULES OF THE ROAD WILL HELP YOU AVOID MANY COLLISIONS. RIDING DEFENSIVELY, BY BEING PREPARED FOR UNPREDICTABLE ACTIONS OF OTHERS, WILL ALSO HELP YOU AVOID COLLISIONS.

ADULTS DO NOT RIDE ON THE SIDEWALK.

Sidewalks are for pedestrians, not for bicycles. The San Francisco Traffic Code prohibits adults from riding bicycles on the sidewalk:

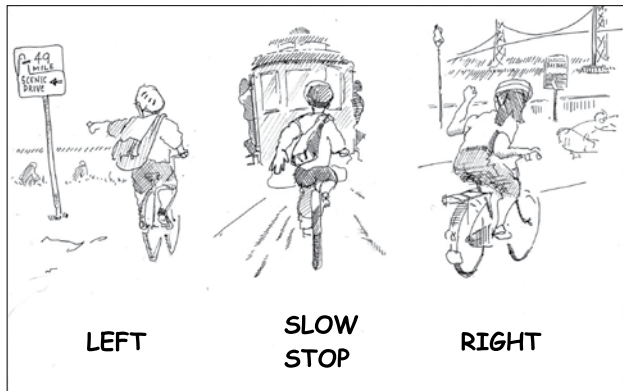
ARTICLE 5: SECTION 96. BICYCLE RIDING RESTRICTED.

It shall be unlawful to ride a bicycle upon any sidewalk area, except at a permanent or temporary driveway or on bikeways heretofore or hereafter established by resolution of the board of Supervisors; provided, however, that juveniles under the age of 13 and riding a sidewalk bicycle, exercising due care and giving the pedestrian the right-of-way, may ride and operate their sidewalk bicycles upon the sidewalk, except such sidewalks as are in front of schools, stores, or buildings used for business purposes. (Amended by Ord. 394-78, App. 8/29/78)

If the traffic on a street makes you uncomfortable riding on that street, choose an alternate route to your destination. Bikes should be walked on sidewalks, especially where there are pedestrians. If you feel that you must break the law and ride on a sidewalk, you must use extreme caution, stay away from doorways, and slow to walking speed. Children on children's bikes (smaller than 21" wheels) may ride on residential sidewalks in San Francisco, but must also yield to pedestrians.

COMMUNICATE!

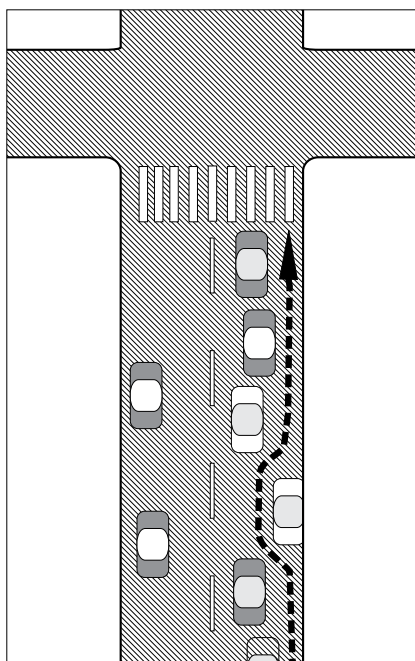
Whether you communicate by using hand signals, your voice, a horn or bell, your position on the street, or even polite hand gestures, making yourself and your intentions known is always a good idea. Using hand signals is a great way to indicate your intentions to motorists, pedestrians and other cyclists. Hand signals are not always possible (in heavy traffic, on rough pavement, while crossing RR tracks, etc.)



Get in the Habit of Signaling Your Intent

so it also pays to show others what you are doing by using correct positioning on the street. (See section on LANE POSITIONING AND INTERSECTIONS)

Use your voice or bell to let other cyclists know that you are passing – and always pass on the left side. Your voice, bell or horn, are also useful to alert drivers who are preparing to enter the street from cross streets, driveways, or parking lots. Sometimes these drivers are looking for gaps in motor vehicle traffic and fail to see objects smaller than motor vehicles. Drivers preparing for left turns at intersections sometimes do not see cyclists. Getting a driver's attention in these cases is vital to your safety, but you should also plan to avoid a collision if the driver does not see you and pulls out in front of you. Slowing enough to be able to stop, or avoid the car with an INSTANT TURN, (see section on AVOIDING COLLISIONS) will prepare you to prevent a collision.



Filtering Through a Line of Waiting Cars.

Many urban cyclists “filter through” traffic stopped at red lights. This is often done between the stopped traffic and the curb. This practice is actually illegal, as it is considered “passing on the right.” There are many issues associated with filtering through stopped traffic, such as passengers getting out of cars, pedestrians walking through the stopped traffic, and very narrow spaces in which to maneuver. If you choose to filter through stopped traffic despite the obvious obstacles, you should do so with the utmost caution, and at significantly reduced speed.