

Cycling Safety

CVIM believes that together with the expertise of the [Pennsylvania Department of Transportation](#), every cyclist can accomplish Cycling for Care in a safe and courteous manner. We want to bring attention to our services, create excitement about our event, be welcomed back, and keep each of our riders as safe as possible as we travel through rural country roads, small towns and rolling hills.



To do that, we will enforce the rules governed by the state of Pennsylvania (see the above link) for bicycling, as well as encourage every rider to embrace the tips suggested by the League of American Bicyclists found below.

Sharing the Road

On the Road

- The same laws that apply to motorists apply to cyclists.
- Obey all traffic control devices.
- Use hand signals to indicate stops and turns.
- Always wear a properly fitting helmet.
- Wear a helmet, no matter how short the trip.

Ride on the Right

- Always ride in the same direction as traffic.
- Use the furthest right lane that heads to your destination.
- Slower moving cyclists and motorists stay to the right.

Ride Predictably

- Ride in a straight line.
- Don't swerve in the road or between parked cars.
- Check for traffic before entering street or intersection.
- Anticipate hazards and adjust your position accordingly.

Be Visible

- Wear brightly colored clothing that provides contrast.
- Use a white front light at night.
- Use a red rear light at night.
- Use a reflector or reflective tape or clothing at all times.
- Announce yourself by making eye contact with motorists.

How Far Right?

Laws

- Most bicycle laws use the same language regarding where cyclists should drive.
- Direction to ride “as far to the right as practicable” appears in most laws.
- No clear definition of “practicable” has been identified by law, but in most situations, where the right-hand car tires go is far enough right to allow motorists to pass safely, yet safely out of the glass and debris in the gutter.

Safety

- Do not ride where you are subject to poor road conditions or constant hazards.
- Give yourself ample room to your right to maneuver in an emergency.
- Ride in the right third of the lane if there is not sufficient room for lane sharing.

Wide Lanes

- Ride just to the right of the travel lane to remain visible to other motorists.
- Ride at least three feet from parked cars in all situations; consider this a right-side limit.
- Always ride in a straight line; do not swerve between parked cars.

Traffic Principles

Ride on the right

- Always ride with the flow of traffic.
- Do not ride on the sidewalk.
- Allow yourself room to maneuver around roadway hazards.

Yield to traffic in busier lanes

- Roads with higher traffic volumes should be given the right-of-way.
- Always use signals to indicate your intentions to switch lanes.
- Look behind you to indicate your desire to move and to make sure that you can.

Yield to traffic in destination lane

- Traffic in your destination lane has the right-of-way.
- Making eye contact with drivers lets them know that you see them.
- Signal and make your lane change early, before you need to.

Directional Positioning

- Position yourself in the right-most lane that goes in the direction of your destination.
- Ride in the right third of the lane.

- Avoid being overtaken in narrow-lane situations by riding in the right third of the lane.

Speed Positioning

- Position yourself relative to the speed of other traffic.
- Left-most lane is for fastest moving traffic, right-most for slower traffic.
- Yield to faster moving vehicles by stating to the right in the lane.

Traffic Lights

Obey, Obey, Obey

- Cyclists, just like motorists, must obey all traffic control devices.
- It takes longer to travel through an intersection on bike; plan to stop for yellow lights.
- Avoid cars that run red lights by waiting for the signal to turn green and scan to make sure it's clear.

Detection

- Bicycles must activate a vehicle detector just like a motor vehicle.
- Detectors are embedded in the roadway; look for squares cut into the roadway.
- Detectors use magnetic forces to pick up vehicles, not weight.

Unresponsive Signals

- In most states, after three minutes, you can treat a red light as a stop sign.
- Pass through a red light only as a last resort.
- Yield to other vehicles while crossing the roadway.

Turns & Turn Lanes

Positioning for Turns

- Before a turn: scan, signal and move into the lane that leads to your destination.
- Ride in the right third or middle of the lane, as lane width dictates.
- To traverse multiple lanes, move one at a time, scanning and signaling each move.

Avoiding Turn Lanes

- If you lane turns into a right turn only lane, change lanes before the intersection.
- Changing lanes too late could result in an overtaking motorist turning in front of you.
- Maintain a constant position relative to the curb or shoulder during a turn.

Beware of Blind Spots

- Most drivers do not always expect to see cyclists on the roadway.
- Do not ride next to another vehicle unless you are in a different lane or passing.
- If you can't see bus, truck or car mirrors, then drivers can't see you.

Signaling

- Signal well before the intersection; make sure you are in proper lane position.
- Left arm out and down with palm to the rear to indicate stopping.
- Left or right arm straight out to indicate left or right turn.

Scan

- Constant identification of potential hazards in front and behind as well as to each side.
- Scanning allows you to avoid dangerous situations before they happen.
- Scan for motorists, road conditions, pedestrians, animals, traffic signals.

How to Ride in Bike Lanes

Safety Considerations

- Bikes are not required to travel in bike lanes when preparing for turns.
- Never ride within three feet of parked cars; beware of the door zone.
- Avoid bike lanes that you think are poorly designed or unsafe; alert your local government.

Intersections

- Avoid riding in lanes that position you on the right side of a right turn lane.
- Bike lanes should stop before an intersection to allow for bikes to make left turns.
- Always signal as you move out of a bike lane into another traffic lane.

Debris

- Report obstructions and poor maintenance to your local government.
- Avoid riding immediately adjacent to curbs where trash collects.
- If debris forces you out of the bike lane, signal your move out into traffic.

Parked Cars

- Never ride within three feet of parked cars.
- Watch for brake lights, front wheels, signals, and driver movements.
- Position yourself in the field of vision of a motorist pulling out of a parking space.

Right Turns

- Avoid riding in lanes that position you on the right side of a right turning motorist.
- Move out of the right turn lane if you are not turning right.
- Ride in the right-most lane that goes in the direction that you are traveling.

Left Turns

- Move out of the bike lane well in advance of the intersection; signal every move.
- Position yourself in the right-most left-turning lane.
- Reposition yourself after executing the turn; remain clear of parked cars.

Touring

Visibility

- Exert greater caution on hills and corners which limit cyclists' visibility.
- Motorists do not expect to encounter cyclists on low volume roads.
- Motorists are familiar with the triangle as a warning sign; attach one to your bike.

Equipment

- Bring tools and parts to deal with mechanical failures which can leave you stranded.
- Water, food, sunscreen, and first aid all are necessities on rural rides.
- Choose a bike that is capable of handling gravel or poorly-maintained roads.

Weather

- Be aware of possible changes in weather and pack accordingly.
- Strong headwinds can severely slow your pace; be prepared to alter your course.
- Be prepared for the worst that you can expect that season on any given day.

Special Notes for Riding in Groups

- Don't follow the "herd": be responsible for yourself in changing lanes and at intersections.
- Say "stopping" if you have to brake hard in a group of cyclists, rather than using a hand signal.
- Don't follow too closely (draft) without the consent of the rider in front.
- Pull completely off the road or path (especially) if you have to stop.
- Ride single file on busy paths, and on roads with wide lanes that can be shared by a bike and a passing car.