

Laws & Safety Tips

Wilmington, North Carolina
Metropolitan Area

Bicycle Map



Bike = Vehicle

In North Carolina, your bicycle is a vehicle and you are its driver. You share the rights and the duties with all other drivers as you use the State's roadway network.

Follow The Road Rules

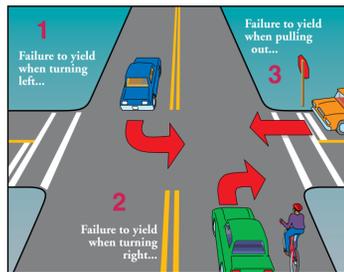
1. Ride on the right side of the road, going with the flow of traffic.
2. Obey all traffic controls — like stop signs, traffic lights, and one-way signs.
3. Signal whenever you intend to turn, merge to another road position, or stop.
4. Yield the right-of-way whenever you enter the road or when you change lanes or road position.
5. Use a good set of lights and reflectors whenever you ride after dark.
6. Don't ride your bike on sidewalks and treat pedestrians with respect.

Watch for motorist errors

Drivers often do things that endanger bicyclists, usually without intending to. Knowing what to look for can help you navigate through traffic more safely. Ride predictably and in a visible location.

Keep your eyes open for the following mistakes and be ready to take evasive action!

- 1 Watch motorists coming towards you who might turn left. Pay particular attention to their road position and, of course, any turn signals.
- 2 Keep an eye on the motorist coming up on your left who might turn right. Listen for hints that the car might be slowing down.
- 3 Watch for movement that could indicate a car is coming out of a driveway or side street.



Ride defensively

Anticipate other people's moves — and their likely mistakes. Keep your eyes moving over the traffic scene, use a mirror, and be ready to take evasive action. Establish eye contact with drivers around you to let them know you are there. Shout if necessary.



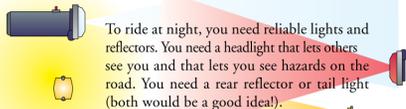
Use good equipment

You don't need an expensive bike to get around... just one that works and that can be repaired and adjusted.

Your brakes should work smoothly and should stop you well even when it's raining. When you squeeze the lever, it shouldn't "bottom out" against the handlebars. And when you let go of the lever, the brake should come away cleanly from the wheel's rim.



Your "drive train" (cranks, pedals, shifters, chain, and gears) shouldn't creak, clunk, or hesitate. The chain shouldn't jump as it goes around. Shifting should be smooth and precise.



To ride at night, you need reliable lights and reflectors. You need a headlight that lets others see you and that lets you see hazards on the road. You need a rear reflector or tail light (both would be a good idea!).

The new flashing halogen tail lights are becoming quite popular. It's also a good idea to use pedal reflectors and some people like the wheel reflectors. Being visible at night is essential.



Nothing on your bike should be loose or rattle. To test if it's "road ready," pick it up a few inches off the ground and drop it to see if it makes any noise. Grease and oil in the right spots to keep your bike running smoothly and to reduce wear and tear.

In short, keep your bike in good condition!

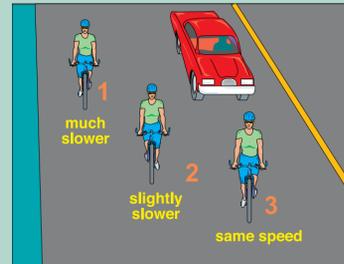
Basic Traffic Riding Techniques

Riding confidently and skillfully in traffic takes practice and an understanding of some basic ideas. One of the most important ideas is road position. Just where you ride on the roadway depends on several important things: your speed, the width and condition of the road, and your destination.

Speed and road position

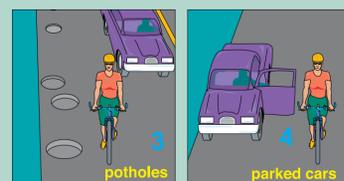
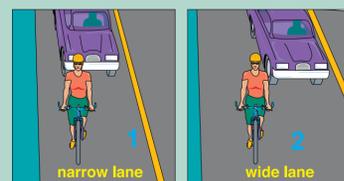
The closer you go to the speed of traffic, the closer you should ride to that traffic.

- 1 When everyone else is going a lot faster than you, keep well to the right.
- 2 When they're going a little faster, ride near traffic. This encourages right-turners to slow and wait instead of passing at the last moment and cutting you off.
- 3 When they're going the same speed as you, ride in the line of traffic. This is your most visible position and ensures you'll be where drivers look for traffic. There's no reason to ride fast near the curb and a lot of good reasons not to.



Width and road position

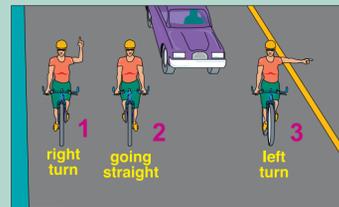
- 1 On a road with very narrow lanes, ride far enough from the edge to discourage dangerously close passing. Many expert riders ride in the car's right wheel track.
- 2 On a road with wide traffic lanes, ride just to the right of the traffic stream. This allows easy passing but reduces the danger caused by turning or crossing traffic.
- 3 On a road with gravel, debris, or potholes on the right side, ride on the smooth pavement to the left of them.
- 4 Always ride a good door's width from parked cars.



Destination and position

Near intersections, it's a good idea to let your road position tell others where you're going.

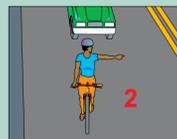
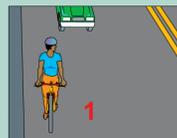
- 1 To turn right, move towards the right edge of the roadway.
- 2 To go straight, keep at least three feet from the curb and stay out of right turn lanes.
- 3 To turn left, ride about three feet right of the center line or, if there is one, use the left turn lane.



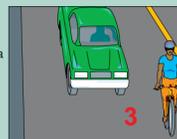
Making left turns

Making left turns is tricky but can be learned. Start on quiet streets and work up to busier ones.

- 1 As you approach an intersection where you want to turn left, look back. If someone is coming, decide whether you can move left across the lane before they arrive.
- 2 If you can cross before they arrive, signal and merge across into a left turn position near the center line or in a left turn lane.



If you can't cross before they arrive, signal and waves you over, move left and wave "thanks." If the driver doesn't slow, let the car pass and try again with the next one.



- 3 Once you've merged to a left turn position, ride straight and watch what's going on around you.

As you practice, you'll get better and better at merging in traffic until it becomes second nature.



Left turns on fast roads

On busy high-speed roads, it's very difficult to negotiate your way across traffic. In this case, it's a good idea to make your turn like a pedestrian and walk across when safe.

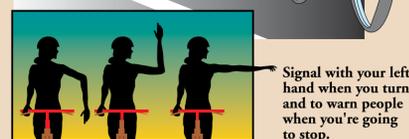
Bike Handling

Having good control of your bike makes traffic riding easier and safer. Practice until you can look around, shift gears, use the brakes, avoid potholes, and stand up on the pedals without diverting your attention from traffic.

Stopping your bike

Looking back over your shoulder tells you what's going on back there. Do it occasionally, just to avoid surprises. And do it before you make any kind of move (like merging left to turn).

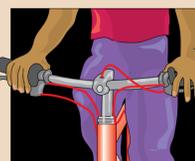
Practice in an empty parking lot until you can do it without swerving. Try easing your grip on the handlebars or dropping the hand of the shoulder you're looking over.



Stop Right Left

Stopping your bike

To stop, use both brakes equally. In an emergency stop, slide back on the saddle and get low. Gradually squeeze harder on the front brake but let off a bit if the rear wheel lifts.



Too much front brake, and you tumble.



Get low and back when braking hard.



Share the Road

Cars and bicycles frequently must Share The Road. On roadways with high levels of bicycle traffic, but relatively demanding conditions for bicyclists, Share The Road signs have been installed. These signs are intended to increase motorists' awareness of bicyclists on a roadway without designating that roadway as a preferred route.

Bicyclists, however, must also be aware of the importance of sharing the road with motorists. If someone comes up behind you, move to the right when safe to allow them to pass. In groups, bicyclists should ride cooperatively and help motorists pass safely.



Wear a Helmet!

If you don't already have one, get a bicycle helmet today! If you have one, wear it every time you ride. Today's helmets look good, are very light, and let in those cooling breezes... all while protecting your head and brain! Helmets cost as little as \$15 and could be your most important piece of equipment.

Why

In a word: protection. A good bike helmet can protect your brain. That's important if your head hits a hard surface... like a road, a curb, or a car. Brains are fragile and once damaged may not mend.



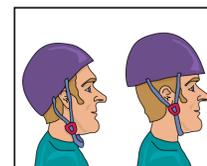
What

Get one that fits snugly but is not tight. Make sure it has CPSC stickers, which prove that it's passed the tests.



How

You should be able to see the front edge of your helmet when you look up. If your helmet tips back, it won't protect your forehead. Also, your neck strap should be snug but not too tight.



Make sure your helmet is the right size and doesn't rock from side to side. You can add interior pads to fine tune a fit.

***In North Carolina, children under the age of 16 are required to wear an approved bicycle helmet.**

Bikes on Buses

In support of alternative forms of transportation, the entire Wave Transit bus fleet is equipped with Sportworks® Bike-Rack-for-Buses. The bicycle racks, mounted to the front of the buses, fold down for easy use and access. The bike racks can carry two bicycles and load independently.

Easy To Use Racks



- 1 Signal the Driver that you will be Loading your Bike.
- 2 To release the rack, squeeze the center handle and slowly lower it down.
- 3 You must be able to lift the bike and place it on the rack yourself.

- 4 Place front wheel on side labeled "Front Wheel".

- 5 Pull up and out on the support arm and hook the arm securely over the top of the front wheel closest to the fork.

- 6 Stay toward the front of the bus and watch your bike to ensure its safety.

- 7 Let the driver know your stop.

- 8 EXIT at the Front Door.

- 9 Tell the Driver that you will be Unloading your Bike.

- 10 If you are the last person to unload a bike, return the rack to its upright position.

Bike Resources

Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Organization
305 Chestnut Street, Floor 4
PO Box 1810, Wilmington, NC 28402-1810
910.341.3258
www.wmpo.org

Cape Fear Breeze
Regional Alternative Transportation Program
305 Chestnut Street, Floor 4
PO Box 1810, Wilmington, NC 28402-1810
910.341.4665
www.capefearbreeze.com

Wilmington Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
305 Chestnut Street, Floor 4
PO Box 1810, Wilmington, NC 28402-1810
910.341.3258
www.wmpo.com/wmbpc

WAVE Transit
1110 Castle Street
PO Box 2258, Wilmington, NC 28402-2258
910.343.0106
www.wavetransit.com

North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation
401 Oberlin Road, Suite 250
1552 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1552
919.733.2804
www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle

East Coast Greenway Committee
27 North Road, Wakefield, RI 02879
401.789.4625
www.greenway.org

This map was produced by the City of Wilmington, New Hanover County, and the New Hanover County Bicycle Advisory Committee. Funding for this project was provided through the City of Wilmington, Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Organization, Bicycle Advisory Committee, New Hanover County and Cape Fear Breeze. Published March 2007.

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Wilmington Metropolitan Area Bicycle Map



Legend & Scale

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|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| River to the Sea Bikeway (Wilmington-Wrightsville Beach Trolley Path) | Future Off-Road Path | Bike Shops |
| Ports of Call (NC Bicycling Highway) | On-Road Bicycle Lane | Public Libraries |
| Cape Fear Run (NC Bicycling Highway) | On-Road Paved Shoulder | Bus Stations |
| Bicycle Advisory Committee Routes | On-Road Wide Outside Lane | City Hall/Town Hall/Government Center |
| East Coast Greenway | Interstates (No Bicycles) | Major Employers |
| Off-Road Path | Major Roads (High Traffic) | Regional Medical Center/Hospital |
| | Local Roads (Low Traffic) | NC Ferry Terminal |
| | Railroads | Federal Point Boat Launch |
| | Schools | NC State Aquarium at Fort Fisher |
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