



A **handbook** for
bicycle riders



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This Handbook is an interpretation of the law made easy to understand by using plain English. Laws change often, so make sure you have the most recent handbook available on the RTA website at www.rta.nsw.gov.au



Introduction

Welcome to *A handbook for bicycle riders* – a useful guide to riding your bicycle safely on NSW roads.

Cycling is an active form of transport for people of all ages – it's healthy, environmentally friendly and enjoyable.

The NSW Government is committed to promoting cycling as a transport choice.

At the RTA, our aim is to improve cycleway infrastructure and promote cycle safety. By working with local councils, schools, community groups and other government departments, we hope to create a better future for cyclists.

In *A handbook for bicycle riders* you'll find valuable tips on road safety, bicycle maintenance, road rules and the legal aspects of riding your bicycle.



Wear the right gear



Reduce your risk of head injury in the event of a bicycle crash by up to 60 per cent – wear an approved helmet.

Bicycle helmets

When riding, you are required by law to wear an approved bicycle helmet securely fitted and fastened on your head. By doing so, you will reduce the risk of brain or head injury by up to 60 per cent in the event of a crash.

Look for the sticker certifying the helmet meets Australian and New Zealand standards (AS/NZS2063) displayed on the helmet to ensure it has passed stringent safety tests.

Protect your head – it's the law.

Choose the best helmet

There are three types of helmets:

- Soft shell – a foam shell with a fabric cover.
- Micro shell – a foam shell with a thin plastic cover.

- Hard shell – a foam shell with a thicker plastic cover.

It is recommended that you choose a brightly coloured helmet to heighten your visibility.

Your helmet must:

- Be approved and conform to Australian and New Zealand standards.
- Be a good fit.
- Have a number of ventilation holes or openings.
- Be layered with thick, energy absorbing hard foam.
- Not hinder vision.
- Be lightweight for comfort.
- Have adjustable straps.
- Not have been damaged or involved in a crash.

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Correctly fit your helmet

A helmet must be correctly fitted to maximise its effectiveness in the event of a crash.

- Position the helmet on your head and tilt it forward until the front of the helmet is two fingers above the bridge of your nose.
- Fasten and straighten the helmet buckles and straps and adjust for a snug fit.
- One finger should be able to fit between the buckle and your chin while the helmet is firmly in place on your head.
- Avoid wearing anything under the helmet such as a hat or beanie as this may affect the correct fitting of the helmet on your head. It may also hinder ventilation causing you to become dehydrated.

Replace your helmet

Damaged helmets can be dangerous. Replace your helmet if:

- The helmet has been damaged or involved in a crash.
- The helmet polystyrene is cracked.
- The straps are worn or frayed.
- The helmet does not properly fit your head.

Choose the right clothing

Increase your visibility

Wear bright clothes during the day and a reflective vest at night. If you don't have a reflective vest, dress in colours that reflect the light from cars such as white or fluorescent green.

Increase your comfort

On long journeys, consider wearing cycling pants and a bright coloured cycling jersey as these are made for cycling comfort.

Stay cool

Select clothing that allows good airflow between fabric and skin – this will keep you cool as you ride.

Be prepared for bad weather

Take a good weatherproof jacket and waterproof pants to help keep you dry in case of rain.

Protect your eyes

Wear sunglasses or clear lens glasses to stop bugs, dirt and rain from flying into your eyes, particularly when you're riding in the country. Sunglasses will also protect your eyes from the glare.



Choose the right **bicycle** and **equipment**



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It's important to ensure your bicycle suits your abilities and is roadworthy before you ride – for your own comfort and because under the law, a bicycle is a legitimate road vehicle.

Choose the right bicycle

There are four main categories of bicycles:

- Road bike.
- Hybrid.
- Mountain bike.
- BMX.

A road bike is suitable for riding on the road, while a hybrid bike is good for multipurpose use. Mountain bikes are best for off-road use and BMX bikes are designed for off-road courses and stunts.

Choose the right size

To choose the best size bicycle, stand over the bicycle with your feet firmly on the ground and measure the distance between the bicycle frame and your crotch.

There should be a clearance of about three centimetres for a road or hybrid bicycle and 10 centimetres for a BMX or mountain bike.

If you're unable to put both heels on the ground when doing this test, the bicycle is too big for you. The bicycle will be unsafe and uncomfortable.

Custom-made bicycles

If you decide to make your own bicycle using specialised or modified parts, or you modify your bicycle with better parts, you should consult a qualified bicycle mechanic to ensure your bicycle is safe before you ride.

Aim for quality parts that have been manufactured to Australian Standards identified by an Australian Standards sticker.

Some bicycle parts including brakes, gears, handlebars and forks may need to be calibrated by a qualified bicycle mechanic. Check with your local bicycle store for further advice.

Comfortable riding

Adjust your seat

Seat positioning is important for both stability and comfort. If the seat height is too low, you could experience sore knees.

Position your seat at a height that allows you to bend your knee slightly when your leg is in its most extended position.

Always check your seat is properly secure before going out on a ride – particularly after making any changes.

Adjust your handlebars

Well-adjusted handlebars will allow you to confidently mount, start off, steer, pedal, balance, ring the bell and stop.

Handlebars can be adjusted on most bicycles and should be adjusted so that your arms are slightly bent and your body leans forward between the handlebars and the seat.

The handlebars should be far enough forward so you can balance your bodyweight between the handlebars and the seat. Too much pressure on the seat can cause back pain,

while too much pressure on the handlebars can cause neck, shoulder and wrist pain.

After any adjustments, and before you go out riding, always check that your handlebars are secure.

Using the pedals

For maximum comfort, wear shoes with flexible soles and ensure the widest part of your foot is over the pedal axle. Stiff soled shoes can make your feet sore. Wearing cycling shoes with cleats will also ensure centralised pressure on the pedals.

Essentials for your bike

Lights and reflectors

Good quality lights and reflectors will increase your visibility on the road.

Light emitting diode (LED) lights are extremely bright and require less energy to power, making your batteries last longer.

Traditional incandescent lights require regular bulb changes and may not be as bright as LED lights.

Human powered bicycle lights do not require batteries, but most will not operate without you physically pedalling. This means that when you're stopped, you could be difficult to see.

It's best to seek expert advice on lights and

reflectors to suit your needs. Pedal and wheel reflectors increase your visibility to other road users.

By law, you must have your lights on between sunset and sunrise and in bad weather.

Brakes

Front and rear working brakes will increase your ability to stop your bicycle suddenly and safely.

By law, your bicycle is required to have at least one working brake.

Bell or horn

A bell or horn enables you to let pedestrians and other cyclists know you're around – this is particularly useful when overtaking.

Under the NSW Road Rules, your bicycle must be fitted with at least one working bell or horn, or a similar warning device.

Tyres

Tyres should be appropriate to the size of your bicycle and inflated to the pressure as listed on the tyre wall.

If you need to replace your tyre or tyre tube, you should purchase a replacement that matches the original. If you're unsure of which tyre or tube to choose, consult your local bicycle shop.

Optional extras for your bike

Tool kit

It's advisable to keep a well maintained bicycle tool kit with you when you are out riding – you'll find it invaluable in the case of a breakdown or emergency.

A standard bicycle tool kit can be purchased from your local bike shop and should include:

- Tyre levers.
- Spare tube.
- Patch kit.
- Multi-purpose tools or wrenches.

Panniers

Panniers are saddlebags that allow you to comfortably and safely transport loads on the side of your bicycle.

Panniers evenly distribute the weight, helping you to maintain your centre of gravity while riding. You'll find using them safer and more comfortable than carrying items on the handlebars, in a backpack or other parts of the bicycle.

Overloading your bicycle, whether using panniers or not, will affect the balance and braking ability of your bike, making it more difficult for you to control and stop.

Bicycle pump

A bicycle pump fixed to your bicycle frame will be very useful. Pumps with a collapsible handle are quick, easy to use and handy if you need to inflate a tube mid-ride.

Foot and electric bicycle pumps are also good to keep at home to inflate tyre tubes quickly and easily.

You may find carrying a pressure gauge in your tool kit worthwhile so that you can ensure your tyres are filled to the correct air pressure.

Rear-view mirror

A rear-view mirror may help you to identify hazards as they approach.

First aid kit

You should consider carrying a good first aid kit when cycling that contains:

- A bandage.
- Antiseptic cream or fluid.
- Band-aids.
- Sun cream.
- Lip balm.



Bicycle computer

A bicycle computer is helpful if you are interested in calculating your speed, distance travelled or kilojoules burnt off during your exercise.

Bicycle computers vary in price, ranging from simple models that calculate basic information, to more expensive models that calculate kilojoules burnt and other advanced statistics.

Bike rack plate

While a rear car bicycle rack makes it quick and easy to transport your bike by car, racks can obscure your car rear number plate. If this happens, you'll need to purchase a special bike rack plate for your car and fix it to the number plate holder on the bicycle rack. Penalties apply for obscuring the number plate.

For safety, and to protect your bike, always check that your bicycle is correctly fitted to the bike rack and firmly fixed in place before you start driving.

For more information on ordering bike rack plates, phone the RTA on 13 22 13 or visit the website at www.rta.nsw.gov.au.

Child carrying devices

There are a number of child carrying devices available for bicycles, including a rear seat child carrier and a behind bicycle child trailer.

It is important to check that buckles and clips are correctly fastened and straps adjusted to comfortably restrain the child in the rear seat carrier.

When using a behind bicycle child trailer, ensure that restraints are used and the trailer is correctly fitted to the main bicycle frame.

Young children must wear a helmet whenever riding – whether sitting in a child carrier or a cycle trailer.

Please consider the stage of development of your child before placing a helmet on the child's head for long periods.

Do not ride with children in heavy traffic or along motorways or freeways. If possible, keep to quiet roads and use cycleways or off-road bicycle paths.



Maintain your bicycle



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Keep your bicycle in good condition.

Keeping your bike in good condition will enhance your cycling experience and the longevity of your bike. Bicycles should always be well maintained and in good working order.

You should carry out a 3-minute check every time you ride your bike. You should also perform regular maintenance checks and have your bicycle professionally serviced at regular intervals, at least once a year, to ensure it is in the safest condition.

If you discover one or more of your bicycle parts is damaged or requires repair, ensure the repair has been completed by a qualified bicycle mechanic and is safe to use before you continue riding.

Servicing your bicycle

The 3-minute check

1. Tyres should feel very firm to touch. The correct pressure is written on the sidewall of each tyre.
2. Check the seat is at the correct height and the seat post is tightly inserted at least 5cm into the frame.
3. Lift the handlebars, spin the front wheel, apply the brakes and check that the:
 - Wheel is properly secured in the forks.
 - Quick release levers are secure.
 - Wheel rotates freely without rubbing on the brakes.
 - Gears and brakes operate smoothly and directly.
4. Lift the seat, turn the pedals, spin the rear wheel, operate the gears and brakes, and apply the above four stage test again.

Weekly maintenance

- Clean and lubricate the chain.
- Check wheel spokes and eyelets for rust or damage.
- Check tyre pressures.

Monthly maintenance

- Check tyres for wear or splits in the rubber.
- Check wheel bearings, chain, gear cluster (back chain wheels), chain rings (front cogs) and head stem (handlebars).

Annual maintenance

- Check the frame.
- Remove handlebar tape to check for rust and weaknesses.
- When purchasing new tyres, make sure they are the right size.
- When replacing the chain, also change the gear cluster as both generally wear out evenly.



Repairing punctures

When repairing a tube:

1. With rear wheels, ensure the chain is placed on the smallest cog before removing.
2. Unhitch the brake from the wheel.
3. Ease the wheels out, never forcing it.
4. Ensure the tyre is fully deflated by depressing the small pin on the tyre valve.
5. Pinch the tyre walls firmly together all the way around the tyre to work the tyre bead away from the rim.
6. Use tyre levers to remove the tyre by hooking one lever between the rim and the tyre wall on one side. Hook the other lever in at the same point and run it around the rim to release the tyre. Make sure the levers do not pinch the inner tube. You can remove the tube with half the tyre off the rim. You do not need to remove the whole tyre.
7. Lift the valve out of the hole, remove the tube then partially inflate it to find the puncture location. Feel around the tube for escaping air and listen for the 'hissing' sound. Alternatively, you can place the tube in water and watch for bubbles to locate the hole.

Make sure the tube is dry before you continue the repair.

8. Roughen the surface of the punctured area using the metal scraper provided with your puncture repair kit or use sandpaper.
9. Glue the roughened area and leave the glue to cure for at least two minutes.
10. Check inside and outside the tyre for the possible cause of the puncture and remove any debris. Also check for cuts through the tyre.
11. Take a patch from your repair kit and remove the metal foil backing. Firmly press the patch onto the glued surface.
12. Check that the rim tape covers the spoke vents and is centred into the rim well.
13. If the tyre has been completely removed, make sure that the tread pattern is facing in the correct direction. Place one tyre wall over the rim edge on one side, keeping the tyre tread in the correct directional pattern.
14. Partially inflate the tube in order to unfold any creases and insert the tube into the tyre.
15. Begin at the valve, rolling the partially inflated tube into the well of the rim.
16. When the tube is bedded into the rim

well, firmly push the tube valve to seat it properly.

17. Starting at the valve, begin rolling the outside wall of the tyre onto the rim. Do not use the levers to do this. Keep checking that the tube is not being pinched by the tyre.
18. If the tyre is a tight fit, start back at the valve and roll/pinch the rubber in a forward motion to increase the amount of stretch in the tyre.
19. Once the tyre is on, inflate the tube then check the valve for any further air leaks and check that there are no bulges in the tyre.
20. For a rear wheel replacement, place the wheel back in by making sure the skewer is between the top and bottom chain and the top chain is engaging the small cog on the cluster. Flip the skewer over to lock.
21. Ensure the wheel is correctly centred in the fork ends.
22. Finally, hook the brakes and spin the wheel to check it is rolling smoothly.



Keep your bicycle **secure**



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Record identification markings

Most bicycles are stamped with a unique identification number, also known as a serial number. You'll usually find the number on the underside of the bicycle frame. It's wise to keep a note of this number in case your bicycle is lost or stolen.

If your bicycle does not have a serial number, you could engrave your own identification number and record the details.

There are several other easy measures you can take to assist the Police if your bicycle is lost or stolen:

- Note features such as colour, stickers, engravings and any unique aspect of your bicycle.
- Take a photo of you and your bicycle.

Lock it up

- You can avoid theft by securing your bicycle when it is unattended.
- Carry a good bicycle lock and ensure that you secure the wheels and the frame.
- Try to use bicycle parking facilities when they are available.
- If you are leaving your bicycle for a longer period of time, consider removing the front and rear wheels and pairing these with the frame. Always lock your bicycle to a permanent fixture that cannot be manipulated to remove the lock.
- Remove all non-fixed items, i.e. lights, panniers, pumps etc.

If your bicycle is stolen

You should report the theft to Police immediately or as soon as possible. Provide the Police with all the relevant details including any identifying features along with your photograph of you and your bike.

Contact your local Police Station on the number provided in the phonebook or phone the Police Assistance Line on 131 444.

Insurance

As a bicycle rider, you are not required to take out compulsory third party insurance on your bicycle like motor vehicles.

However, you should be aware that if you have a crash involving another person or that person's property, you may be financially liable for any injury or damage you cause.

Bicycle insurance is available to protect yourself against liability and to protect your investment.

Check with your insurance company or contact Bicycle NSW.





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The quickest route may not be the safest.

Plan the safest route

Before you set out, plan the route that provides the safest road conditions.

Maximise your use of off-road and on-road bicycle lanes, and roads that have low traffic volumes and speeds.

Check the weather

When you're riding a bicycle, the weather can affect your safety and those around you. If possible, get a forecast for the day ahead before cycling. If you find yourself riding in poor conditions, keep the following advice in mind:

Riding in the rain

- Use your front and rear lights and wear a reflective vest to make yourself visible to other traffic when riding in dark, wet and slippery conditions.

- Try to stay upright and steer with your arms rather than leaning into corners with your hips.
- Take corners slower - wet riding surfaces reduce traction between the tyres and the surface.
- Apply the back brake smoothly and prepare yourself well in advance before entering a corner. Using the front brake only in a sudden stop has the potential to send you over the handle bars.
- Avoid hazards such as potholes and storm water grates.
- If you're riding along a poorly drained road, avoid water channels by moving towards the centre of your lane – but remember to look over your shoulder and give a hand signal before doing so. Move back to the left of the lane once you have passed the hazard or when it is safe to do so.
- Wear bright waterproof clothing.

Know when it's not safe

Drugs and alcohol

Drugs and/or alcohol can inhibit your ability to respond quickly and safely in a hazardous situation. Riding a bicycle under the influence of drugs or alcohol is illegal and dangerous for you and those around you.

Prescription drugs

Prescription drugs can cause you to feel drowsy and may slow your reaction time.

Medicines that may affect your ability to ride safely include:

- Some painkillers.
- Some medicines for blood pressure, nausea, allergies, inflammation and fungal infections.
- Tranquillisers, sedatives and sleeping pills.
- Some diet pills.
- Some cold and flu medicines.

You can reduce your risk by:

- Reading the label of any medicine you take.
- Not cycling after taking any medication that warns of an effect.

- Not taking someone else's medication, even if you know the person.
- Asking your doctor if in doubt.

Alcohol

Alcohol is a depressant that reduces your ability to cycle safely because it:

- Slows the brain's function, reducing your ability to respond to situations, make decisions or react quickly.
- Reduces your ability to judge distance and the speed of other road users.
- Makes it harder to do more than one thing at a time.
- Affects your sense of balance and concentration.
- Makes you sleepy.

If you are going out drinking, it's safest to arrange a lift home by taxi or a car driven by a non-drinker. Leave your bike at home.

The safest Blood Alcohol Concentration for any road user is zero.



Fatigue

Fatigue is a term used to describe the feeling of being 'sleepy', 'tired' or 'exhausted'. It's your body's way of telling you that you need sleep.

While many people think fatigue only affects drivers of cars and motorcycles, fatigue can also affect bicycle riders. For bicycle riders, the problem with fatigue is that it severely reduces your concentration and judgement and slows down your reaction time.

Warning signs of fatigue

- Yawning.
- Poor concentration.
- Tired or sore eyes.
- Restlessness.
- Drowsiness.
- Slow reaction.
- Boredom.
- Feeling irritable.

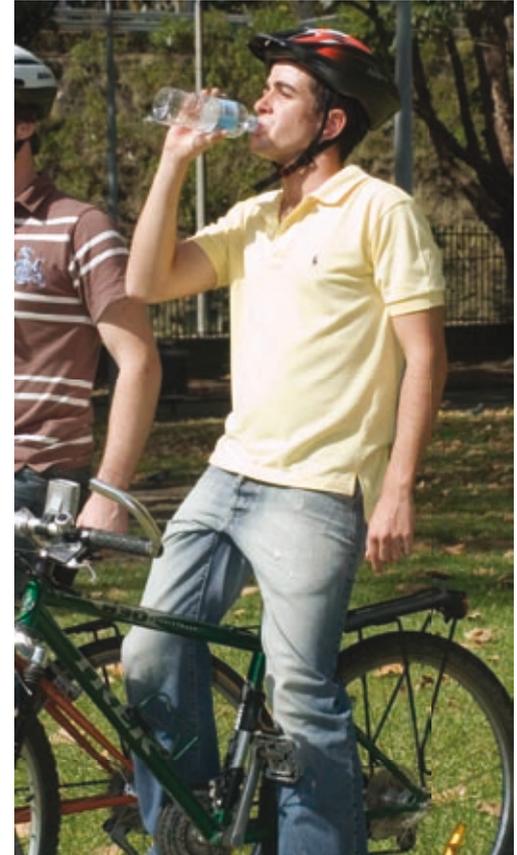
If you are experiencing any of the warning signs, you may be suffering from fatigue. For safety, delay your bicycle ride until the symptoms disappear.

Useful tips for managing fatigue

- Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated.
- Avoid too much coffee or sweet soft drinks.
- Stay away from alcohol at all costs.
- Eat small amounts of simple foods frequently such as fruit, nuts, a muesli bar or a small chocolate bar.
- Avoid fatty foods and large meals before or during a ride.
- In winter, don't make yourself too snug and warm – it's good to be a little cool.

Fatigue on the road

If you feel fatigue while you're out cycling, pull to a safe area on the side of the road and have a rest. If possible, discontinue your ride.



Responsible riding on the road

It's important that you don't rush into cycling. Give yourself plenty of time to understand the road rules and gain riding experience before you ride in traffic.

If you are a new rider or have purchased a new bike, it's a good idea to find a space away from traffic where you can practise and build your confidence before you take to the road.

Hazard perception

See road hazards (pedestrians, motorists, other bicycle riders and the road environment, eg potholes, opening doors and grates).

Think about what might happen and anticipate how to avoid a problem.

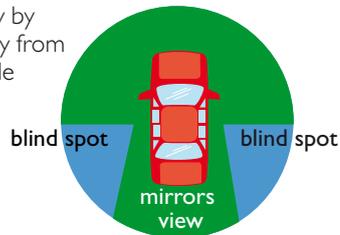
Do what you feel will ensure your safety.

Check for hazards

Maximise your safety when riding by constantly assessing your environment for any hazards that may cause a crash. Scan the road for holes, gaps, uneven surfaces, debris and regularly look over your shoulder to check what is beside and behind you. Do not wear headphones when riding. You must be able to hear potential hazards so you can react quickly.

Avoid blind spots

A blind spot is an area outside a motor vehicle that cannot be seen in the rear or side mirrors of the vehicle. When riding in traffic, it is important to increase your visibility by keeping away from motor vehicle blind spots.



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Anticipate vehicle movement

Watch other road users – look at the movement of vehicle wheels, increases or decreases in speed, brake lights and the use of indicators that signal a change of direction. Make eye contact with other road users and avoid riding alongside a motor vehicle for longer than required.

Stopping

When you need to stop, apply your back brake initially and then your front so that your bicycle comes to a gentle halt. A sudden stop could send you over the handlebars and cause an injury.

Travelling behind a car

You must not ride your bicycle within two metres of the rear of a moving motor vehicle continuously for more than 200 metres.

Intersections, roundabouts and turning

Traffic light loops

Most traffic lights in NSW are controlled by loops. These are embedded in the road surface close to the stop line at a signalised intersection. Loops operate through a magnetic wave. When a car disrupts the wave, the signal detects that a car is at the lights.

Sometimes bicycles do not trigger the loop to change the lights, simply because they do not contain as much metal as cars.

To make sure the loop detects your presence, try to position your bicycle at the sensitive points, usually in the centre of the square loop.

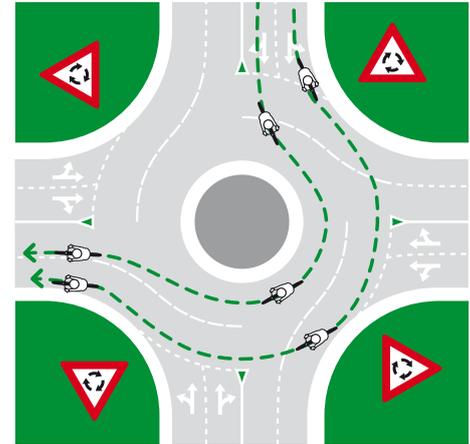
Multi-lane roundabouts

You should assess your own skill level before attempting to travel through a multi-lane roundabout. If you don't feel comfortable negotiating a multi-lane roundabout, take a different route.

Turning right at multi-lane roundabouts can be dangerous for bicycle riders – particularly if you are unfamiliar with the area or if there is heavy traffic.

You can make a right turn in one of two ways:

- Use the outer left lane, **giving way at each exit** to all traffic exiting the roundabout.
- Use the inner right lane and complete the turn in the same way a car would do.



Intersections

Before you negotiate an intersection, try to make eye contact with drivers who are giving way. If you do not see their eyes look at you, it is unlikely they have seen you.

Turning right

To ensure a safe right turn, look at the traffic around you then indicate and turn when the traffic is clear. Make sure you look over your shoulder to identify potential hazards beside or behind you before making the turn.

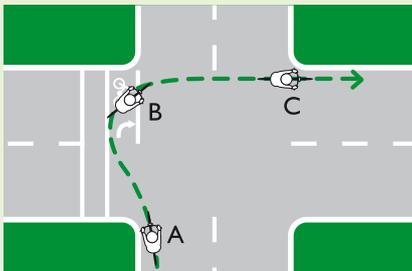
Hook turns

When you need to turn right in heavy traffic, you may find it useful to make a hook turn.

A hook turn is made in three stages, using the left lane to turn right.

- Position your bicycle to the far left side of the road then proceed into the intersection, keeping clear of any marked crossings.
- Wait near the far left side of the intersection; giving way to vehicles travelling straight through the intersection. If there are traffic lights, wait until the lights on the road you are entering turn green.
- Proceed when it is safe and legal.

Some intersections provide a hook turn storage box and you must use this facility.



Correct hook turn with storage box

At some intersections, bicycle riders are prohibited from making hook turns. A 'No Hook Turn by Bicycles' sign will be displayed.

Negotiating heavy traffic

Freeways and motorways

Freeways and motorways carry large volumes of traffic with multiple high-speed traffic lanes in each direction. If you ride a bicycle along a freeway or a motorway, you must obey the law and only ride on the shoulder.

It is essential to take good care when riding along the shoulders of freeways and motorways – particularly when approaching and crossing access ramps used by both bicycles and vehicles. Be aware that you may not be able to use all sections of the freeway or motorway. Check your route before starting your journey.

Freeway/motorway crossing points

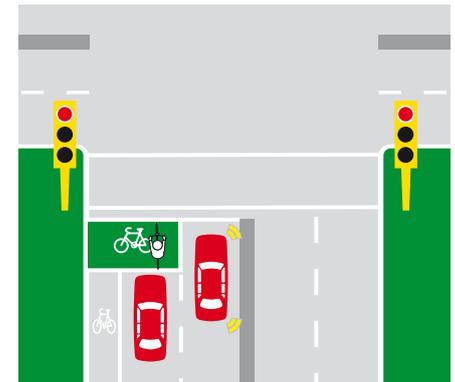
If you ride your bicycle on freeways and motorways, look for and, whenever possible, use designated signposted bicycle crossing areas.

Be aware that vehicles are generally travelling fast, so make sure you allow more space before crossing.

Avoid riding beside heavy vehicles. Slow or stop to allow them to pass, then safely continue your journey.

Bicycle storage areas

Some signalised intersections may have bicycle storage areas. These are painted areas on the road in front of the stop line that allow you to wait at traffic lights in safety. You can enter these areas from the preceding bicycle lane moving to the far left or right to make your left or right turn. You must wait for the green signal before proceeding and follow the arrows on the road.



Using a bicycle storage area

Heavy vehicles

As a bicycle rider you should be particularly aware of heavy vehicles including buses and trucks as they pose great risk to your safety. The size and weight of these vehicles results in many blind spots and they need more room to turn and brake.

Remember, if you can't see the driver, they can't see you.

When heavy vehicles pass you at high speed, be aware that the wind will affect your stability and control of your bicycle.

Rail and tram tracks

Check both ways twice and listen for oncoming trains/trams before you cross a track.

Observe directions given by flashing lights or boom gates warning you of an oncoming train.

To ride safely over tracks, approach at a right angle to avoid your wheels getting trapped.

If the crossing is too difficult to ride over, dismount and walk your bicycle.



Avoiding and managing crashes

Practising safe cycling will help you respond correctly to hazardous situations.

As a bicycle rider, you have greater exposure when travelling on the road than drivers in motor vehicles. It's most important to be alert to all traffic and hazards and be capable and competent when riding.

Causes of crashes

Times of crashes

Most crashes involving bicycle riders occur on weekdays between 4pm and 6pm. At this time of day, the vision of all road users can be impaired due to the setting sun, heavy traffic flow and fatigue.

Make yourself more visible and safer at this time by wearing high visibility clothing and using front and rear lights. In addition, try to keep a buffer space between you and the traffic. Use your hazard perception skills to try to predict the actions of motor vehicle drivers around you.

At intersections

Drivers often claim not to have seen bicycle riders coming through intersections as an explanation for a crash. Try to make eye contact with drivers at intersections to ensure that you are noticed. Also scan the road environment on approach to intersections and assess other vehicles approaching, regardless of direction.

From the footpath

If you are travelling on a shared path and wish to join the traffic, it's recommended that you stop at a point where you have a good sight line to traffic movement on the road. Don't leave the path between parked vehicles as oncoming drivers will not be able to see you.

Vehicles turning in front of you

Be alert to vehicles that may cross in front of you. This could be a vehicle turning left or right into a street or driveway. Pay particular attention to cars when you are travelling on the left hand side of a queue. Often vehicles will turn across your path if there is a gap in the queue.



Parked cars and opening doors

Avoid crashes caused by opening doors – always look through car rear windows to determine whether or not an occupant is about to get out of the car.

Parked cars may pull out from the kerb. Look for clues such as a flash of the brake or reversing lights, right hand indicator or a sign that the car is about to move such as front wheels moving.

You should also slow down or keep a buffer zone between you and any parked cars. Use your bell or horn to signal your approach to vehicle occupants.

Reversing vehicles

Bicycle riders can be seriously injured when a car suddenly reverses out of a driveway or car parking area. Children are especially at risk around parked cars and may not be visible to the driver in the rear vision mirror.

Although the onus is on the driver to reverse safely, you need to remain aware of reversing cars - particularly when riding on shared paths.

Establish eye contact with the driver before you ride behind a parked vehicle and look for reversing lights and beepers that warn you of a car which is about to reverse.

What to do in case of a crash

If you are involved in a crash, the first thing you should do is check yourself and the other party for injuries. If you or the other party is hurt, seek medical assistance by phoning 000.

Record details of the crash

Try to record the following details in case you need to lodge a report with the Police, a claim for workers compensation or insurance:

1. Location, date and time of the crash.
2. Details of the parties involved
 - a. Name and address
 - b. Driver licence numbers
 - c. Number plates
3. Details of the crash
 - a. Injuries sustained
 - b. Damage to property
 - c. Events leading to the crash
4. Obtain witness information
 - a. Names and contact details

Report the crash to Police

If a person is seriously injured or killed in a crash, you must immediately report the crash to the Police.

If no one is injured, but damage to property exceeds \$500, you need to report the incident to the Police within 24 hours.

When calling the Police, make sure you have all the details of the crash available.

If the crash involves a person being seriously injured or killed, you may be required to attend a Police Station for an interview.

Report the crash to your insurance company

If you have insurance cover for property damage or personal injury you should report the crash to your insurance company.

You should report any crash to the Police as soon as possible after the incident.



Road rules for bicycle riders

Bicycle riders have the same rights and responsibilities on the road as other road users. There are also special road rules that only apply to bicycle riders.

The NSW Road Rules and the Road Users' Handbook are good information sources for NSW road rules. They can be viewed online at www.rta.nsw.gov.au.

Special rules for bicycle riders

- You may perform hook turns at intersections unless prohibited by sign posting.
- You do not need to give a left or stop signal, or signal when making a hook turn.
- You may ride two abreast but not more than 1.5 metres apart.
- You may overtake two other bicycle riders who are riding side-by-side.

- You may travel in a Bus Lane, Tram Lane, Transit Lane or Truck Lane but not in a Bus Only Lane.
- You may ride to the left of a continuous white edge line.
- You may overtake on the left of stopped and slow moving vehicles.

Responsibilities for bicycle riders

Bicycle riders have a number of responsibilities when riding on and off the road.

These responsibilities include:

- Bicycle riders must sit astride of the rider's seat facing forward, with at least one hand on the handlebars.
- Bicycle riders must not ride a bicycle that does not have at least one working brake and a fully functioning bell, horn, or similar warning device.
- Bicycle riders must use the storage boxes when provided.



- Bicycle riders must not ride a bicycle at night or in hazardous weather conditions unless the bike displays a flashing or steady white light from the front, and a flashing or steady red light from the rear. The bike also requires a red reflector which is visible from the rear.
- When in the left lane of a multi-lane roundabout and wanting to turn right, bicycle riders must give way to any vehicle leaving the roundabout.
- Bicycle riders must not carry more people on a bike than it is designed for.
- Where there is a marked bicycle lane in their direction, bicycle riders must use the lane – unless it is impracticable to do so.
- Bicycle riders must not ride on a crossing unless there is a green bicycle light.
- Bicycle riders must not be towed by or hold onto another moving vehicle.
- Bicycle riders must wear an approved bicycle helmet securely fitted and fastened on the rider's head.
- Bicycle riders must not carry a passenger who is not wearing a securely fitted and fastened helmet.

- Bicycle riders must keep to the left of any oncoming bicycle rider or pedestrian on a footpath, shared path or separated path.

Riding in traffic

Bicycle riders must use a Bicycle Lane where one is available. If there is no Bicycle Lane, ride to the left of the road but avoid grates, debris and parked cars.

When riding in traffic you must stop:

- At red lights.
- At stop signs.
- At give way signs if there is traffic travelling on the crossroad.
- At a railway crossing when:
 - There is a stop sign.
 - The crossing lights are flashing.
 - The boom gate is down.
 - A railway employee signals traffic to stop.
 - A train is coming.
- When entering a roadway, it is advisable especially from driveways.



Hand signals

Hand signals help to tell other road users what you are doing and where you are going. You are required by law to give a hand signal when turning right or merging to the right lane.

When signalling, do so about 30 metres before you turn or change lanes or lane position.

Giving a hand signal does not guarantee your safety. Assess the actions of other road users around you to make sure it is safe before turning or changing lanes.

Riding on a pedestrian crossing

You can only ride your bicycle across a crossing where bicycle crossing lights are installed.

At a red bicycle crossing light:

- You must stop before the crossing and only proceed if the bicycle crossing light changes to green or is not showing red.



At a green bicycle crossing light:

- You may proceed through the crossing area exercising caution if there is also pedestrians.

In addition to bicycle crossing signals, you must obey any traffic signals or signs, as would other road users.

If there is no bicycle crossing light, you must dismount and walk across the crossing.

Bus Lanes

Bicycle riders can use Bus Lanes, however, you should be cautious of other vehicles using the lane. Particularly when approaching intersections as all vehicles can travel in a Bus Lane if they intend to turn left.

Bus Only Lanes

Bicycle riders are not permitted to use a lane when the words 'Buses Only' appear on a bus lane sign or lane markings.



'B' lantern

There are traffic lights with 'B' lanterns installed on Bus Only lanes to provide priority for buses.

When you come to a set of traffic lights with a 'B' lantern you are not allowed to go on a green bus traffic signal. Instead, follow the main traffic signals displaying a red, amber or green light.

Speed

You should always adjust your speed to your environment. For example, sharing a path,

you should try to ride at a speed that doesn't endanger yourself or those around you by travelling in excess of what is appropriate to the path environment, your experience and skill level. There are some shared paths with enforceable speed limits.

School zones and school buses

School zones are signposted and operate outside schools in the morning (8am through to 9.30am) and in the afternoon (2.30pm through to 4pm) during school term time. There are also a small number of school zones that have different operating hours to suit the individual school.

As a road user, you are required to give way to children crossing the road at a pedestrian crossing. You should also follow the direction of a pedestrian crossing supervisor using the handheld stop/slow sign.

Be wary of car doors opening and other potential hazards like children running across the road.

Buses can pose a hazard to bicycle riders. Buses may pull out at any time in front of you so allow yourself plenty of clearance and move quickly.

You must give way to a bus that is attempting to merge into traffic in accordance with the law.

Shared paths

Shared paths are paths designed for pedestrian and bicycle use. Shared paths are signposted and marked so you can tell if you are meant to share the path with pedestrians.

When riding on a shared path, keep to the left at all times unless it is impractical to do so, and give way to pedestrians. You should also adjust your speed to suit the environment.

Use your bell or horn to signal your presence to other users of the shared path, especially when approaching pedestrians and other riders.

As a bicycle rider, you must overtake on the right hand side.

Be particularly careful around young children, older pedestrians and animals.



Riding on a footpath

Generally, bicycle riders must not ride on a footpath.

However, children under the age of 12 years can ride on the footpath unless there is a NO BICYCLES sign.

Bicycle riders aged 12 years or older must not ride on a footpath unless:

1. The rider is an adult accompanying and supervising a child who is under 12 years old.
2. The rider is aged 12-17 years, and is cycling under the supervision of an adult accompanying a child under 12 years old.

Please note: A cyclist must not ride a bicycle on any part of the Sydney Harbour Bridge other than the cycleway.

10. Penalties

Under NSW legislation, you can be penalised if you commit a traffic offence. There are specific road rules for bicycle riders that also carry fines.

How penalties are issued

Penalties for bicycle offences are usually issued by a Police officer and are issued on the spot. A Police officer may ask you your name, address and other personal details to verify your identity.

Some penalties

Negligent riding

The law provides for penalties for riding a bicycle in a negligent or dangerous manner.

Riding a bicycle negligently means riding to endanger the life of yourself or others.

Drink riding

Riding under the influence of alcohol is a serious offence. You can be fined or imprisoned by a court if you are found to be drink riding.

Not wearing a helmet

You are required by law to wear an approved helmet securely fitted and fastened on your head when riding a bicycle.

For more information about penalties, visit the RTA website www.rta.nsw.gov.au.

Fine defaults

If you do not settle a fine you have received within the time allowed, the State Debt Recovery Office will pursue the matter.

For more information on the process go to www.sdro.nsw.gov.au.



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A **handbook** for bicycle riders



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Roads and Traffic Authority

The information in this brochure is intended as a guide only and is subject to change at any time without notice. It does not replace the relevant legislation.

For further enquiries

www.rta.nsw.gov.au | 13 22 13

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