

A bicycle safety initiative of Manitoba Public Insurance

Throughout Manitoba, people are discovering the joys of cycling. It's an exciting, low-cost activity that's good for your health, good for the environment and fun for people of all ages.

As the cycling community grows in numbers, so does the need for an increased awareness of road safety. Whether you're a cyclist or a motorist, Manitoba Public Insurance is committed to helping you recognize and avoid dangerous situations. Road safety is a shared responsibility and by knowing and respecting the rules of the road, we can work together to stay safe, have fun and build healthier communities.

This section will provide cyclists with the information needed to ride safely on Manitoba roads and motorists with the information to recognize the cyclist's position on the road and the potential hazards they face. Whether you are a cyclist or a motorist, you can benefit from a better understanding of our respective rights and responsibilities on the road.

- All of the cycling content from this website is available in an easily downloadable
- Under "[Additional Resources](#)" you will find PDFs of:
 - Our youth "[I Cycle Safely](#)" brochure
 - Our adult "[Bike Safely](#)" booklet
 - Information on the "I Cycle Safely" and "Bike Safe" presentations

This information was produced in collaboration with representatives from Bike to the Future; the Manitoba Cycling Association; Manitoba Healthy Living, Youth & Seniors; and the City of Winnipeg Active Transportation group. We are grateful to the representatives from these organizations who worked with us to develop cycling safety information that we hope will be useful to both novice and experienced cyclists, as well as the motorists they share the road with.

DISCLAIMER

Throughout this section suggestions are provided on how cyclists should position themselves on the roadway to be visible and predictable. These suggestions are provided by cycling advocacy groups who contributed to the development of this material. The Highway Traffic Act is the legislation that governs the rights and responsibilities of cyclists when riding on the roadway.

The Highway Traffic Act indicates that cyclists should position themselves as close as is practicable to the right side of the roadway. As close as is practicable is not specifically defined in The Highway Traffic Act and as such cyclists should exercise good judgment when determining their positioning on the roadway. Factors to consider may include traffic volume, road conditions, weather hazards, and municipal lane restrictions.

The Benefits of Cycling

Why Cycle?

Cycling is fun – Riding your bicycle helps you be active while enjoying your natural surroundings. It also provides the independence of using your own power.

Cycling is healthy – Incorporating exercise into your lifestyle has many health benefits. It can strengthen your immune system, lower blood pressure and cholesterol, reduce stress, strengthen your heart and increase your energy level. It's also easy on your joints and can be done at any level of intensity, which makes it a great activity for people of all ages and levels of fitness.

Cycling is practical and cost effective – There are no gas tanks to fill and parking is usually free. And it's often just as fast as a car or bus in city traffic.

Cycling is good for the environment – Cycling produces no air pollution, greenhouse gas or noise. It also reduces traffic congestion, deterioration of road surfaces and land requirements for roads and parking lots.

Cycling injuries in Manitoba and Canada – the facts

According to Statistics Canada, 263 cyclists were killed in road collisions in Canada between 2000 and 2004. Each year, approximately 7,500 cyclists suffer serious injuries and another 70,000 are treated in hospital emergency rooms for cycling-related injuries.

In Manitoba:

- Over the last five years, **each year** we have seen **two fatalities** and more than **200 injuries** involving cyclists.
- Almost 45 per cent of collisions that involve bicycles and motor vehicles occur at [intersections](#).
- Right and left turns comprise close to 25 per cent of total cycling injury claims.
- More than 20 per cent of cycling injury claims involve cyclists riding on **sidewalks** and coming off those sidewalks at intersections.
- Cyclists 15-19 years of age are the most likely to be killed or injured.
- More than 75 per cent of cyclists killed or injured in a collision with a motor vehicle were not wearing a helmet at the time.
- Collisions with vehicles occur most frequently during heavy traffic times of the day with roughly:
 - 30 per cent occurring during afternoon rush hour between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.
 - 70 per cent between Monday and Thursday

Why are collisions occurring?

Claims reports suggest that the primary fault is often shared between drivers and cyclists in bicycle and motor vehicle collisions that cause injuries. There are many causes for bicycle and motor vehicle collisions, such as not following the rules of the road, failing to yield the right of way, motorists failing to see the cyclist or motorists squeezing cyclists to edge of the road.

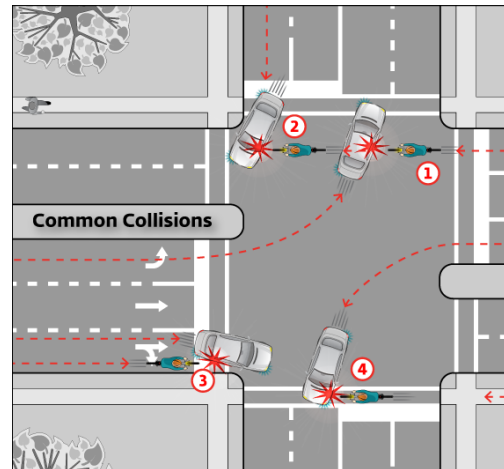
To avoid collisions, road users should always be aware of their surroundings. Whether you're on a bicycle or in a car, it's important to continually scan your surroundings as focusing on only one area can cause you to not see something else that is occurring.

[This short video](#) illustrates the point.

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Some common collisions that take place between cyclists and motorists happen when:

1. A motorist turns left in front of a cyclist who is travelling through the intersection.
2. A motorist turns onto a roadway from an adjacent street or driveway and into the path of a cyclist.
3. A motorist passes a cyclist close to an intersection and then turns right into the path of the cyclist who is travelling straight through.
4. A cyclist is travelling illegally on the sidewalk and crossing an intersection.



The Costs of Cycling Collisions

The cost of cycling collisions is significant in Manitoba. Claims involving cyclists (including all fatal, injury or physical damage only collisions) cost Manitoba Public Insurance over \$34 million dollars between 2005 and 2009. That's an average of \$6.8 million annually. The average cost of a bicycle claim over the past five years was \$18,753 and it was even higher in 2009, at \$20,838.

And the human costs are immeasurable. Bicycle collisions with motor vehicles often result in serious, life-changing injuries, which can devastate families and require years of recovery.

Sharing the road – cyclist and motorist responsibilities

Through cooperation and respect, motorists and cyclists can share the road safely.

Cyclists have the same rights as motorists but you also have the same responsibilities and must follow the same rules. The following are known as the **Three R's** of safe cycling:

- **Same Roads:** Motor vehicles and bicycles share the same roads.
- **Same Rights:** As a cyclist, you have a right to your space on the road. The key is to understand your rights and consistently follow them.
- **Same Rules:** Other than the difference in a cyclist's position on the road, we all have to follow the same rules of the road.

By understanding and practicing the **Three R's**, cyclists can help ensure your own safety and, at the same time, help motorists understand your intentions.

Motorists should always follow the rules of the road and ensure that you give cyclists the courtesy and space they require to ride safely.

Here are some basic responsibilities for cyclists and motorists:

Your responsibilities as a cyclist

- Ride respectfully – the same traffic laws that apply to motorists also apply to you.
- Use [hand signals](#) and eye contact to communicate your actions to motorists.
- Obey traffic control signals and signs.
- Ride in a straight line and do not weave between parked cars.
- Do not ride on the [sidewalk](#).
- Ride single file when riding with other cyclists.
- Ride as closely as [practicable](#) to the right hand boundary of the road.
- Increase your visibility by wearing [brightly coloured clothing](#).
- Use a white front light and a red rear light in low light conditions.

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“As Close as Practicable”

The law requires cyclists to ride in the same direction as other traffic and position themselves “as close as practicable” to the right edge or curb of the roadway. This does not mean hugging the curb.

Experienced cyclists recommend riding approximately one metre away from the curb to maintain a straight line while avoiding hazards such as potholes, wide cracks, service covers, debris and puddles. However, it’s important to note that *The Highway Traffic Act* does not define “as close as practicable”. To avoid unnecessary conflicts with motorists, cyclists need to use your best judgment when determining how far away from the curb to ride and when it may be necessary to move closer to the middle of the lane.

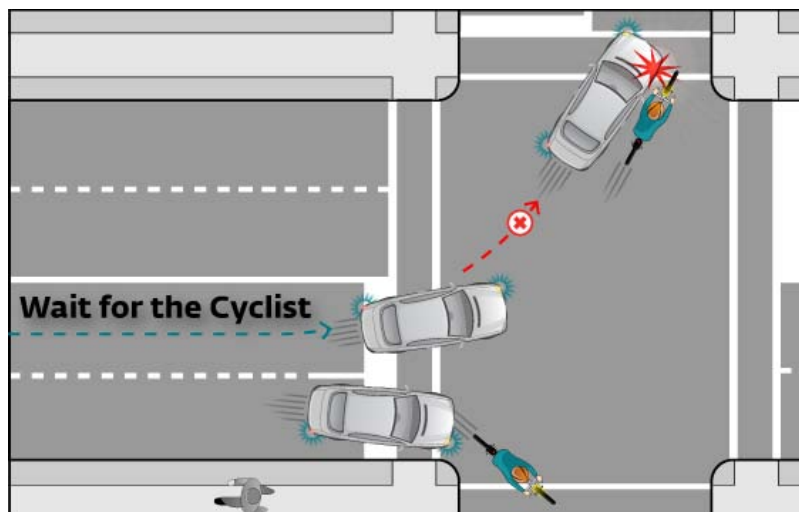
Your responsibilities as a motorist

Motorists can help reduce the number of bicycle and motor vehicle crashes, injuries and fatalities by understanding cyclists’ positioning on the road and following some important traffic tips:

- Reduce your speed when encountering cyclists.
- Leave a safe following distance should the cyclist need to stop suddenly.
- The sound of a car horn can be very startling to a cyclist. Try not to use yours.
- Recognize the hazards that cyclists may face (e.g. debris on the road) and give them plenty of space. Cycling advocacy groups suggest providing approximately one metre of clearance, although *The Highway Traffic Act* does not specify the distance motorists must give when riding alongside or passing cyclists. However, motorists should always be cautious and respectful and provide adequate space to prevent potential collisions.
- When turning left, watch for and yield to oncoming cyclists, just as you would to oncoming motorists.
- When turning right, yield to any cyclist traveling on your right. Do not try to pass a cyclist if you are planning to turn right at the next intersection or driveway.
- Children on bicycles are often unpredictable. Expect the unexpected and slow down.
- Look for cyclists before opening your car doors.

Understanding a cyclist's position on the road

- According to *The Highway Traffic Act*, cyclists are required to ride as close as practicable to the right hand boundary of the lane and/or road. **However, there are certain times when cyclists may choose to be further away from the right side of the road or ride closer to the middle of the lane.** These include:
 - When approaching adverse road conditions such as potholes, puddles or construction.
 - When passing parked vehicles and additional space is required to stay clear of the door zone.
 - When making a left turn. In this case, experienced cyclists recommend you position yourself closer to the centre of the turning lane. This will prevent a motorist from passing you within the same lane as you make the turn.

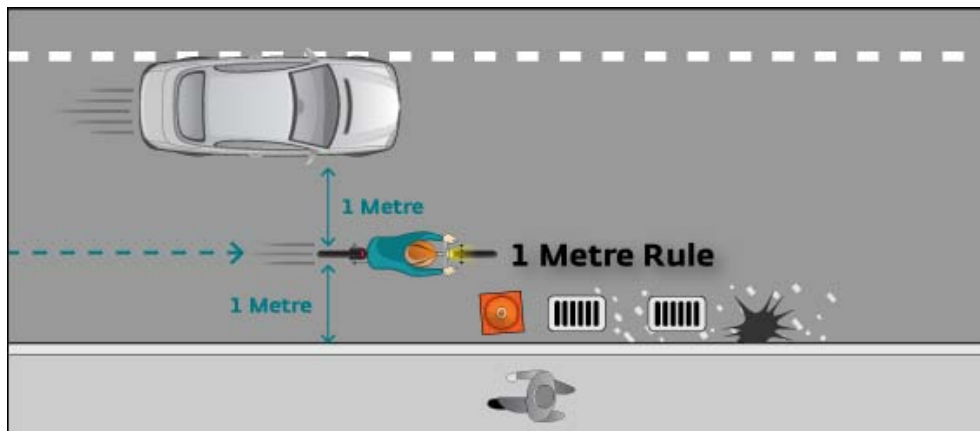


- When the right lane is intended for right turns only and you are intending to go straight, you should remain in the adjacent lane and carry on through the intersection.
- When there is slower moving or stopped traffic in the right hand lane, you are allowed to pass on the left as long as it is safe to do so. In this situation, you would occupy a position closer to the centre of the passing lane while completing the pass and then return to the right edge of the lane when the pass is completed.
- When cycling on one-way streets with more than three lanes of traffic.

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When passing a cyclist

- Motorists should pass a cyclist only when it is safe to do so. Cycling advocacy groups suggest providing approximately one metre of clearance, although *The Highway Traffic Act* does not specify the distance you must give when riding alongside or passing cyclists.
- Check over your shoulder before moving back into your lane.



- There are some situations where it is not safe to pass a cyclist including:
 - In construction zones where traffic is reduced to one narrow lane.
 - In lanes with narrow widths that do not permit passing at “safe distance”.
 - In a yield lane.

By using common sense and following the rules of the road, cyclists and motorists can make streets safer for everyone.

Watch [this short video](#) about the importance of sharing the road.

Traffic laws – *The Highway Traffic Act*

In Manitoba, the laws that regulate cyclists are contained in *The Highway Traffic Act*.

The Act has valuable information for both cyclists and motorists regarding the rules of the road. Some of the sections that apply to cyclists are referenced below. Click on the “HTA” beside each segment to be directed to the corresponding section in the official *Highway Traffic Act*.

- By definition, a bicycle is propelled by pedals, not a motor. **(HTA)**

A "bicycle" means a device having any number of wheels upon which a person sits astride and which is propelled solely by human muscular power through the use of pedals.

- By definition, a power-assisted bicycle can be propelled using pedals but also has an electric motor under 500 watts. Power-assisted bicycles cannot exceed 32 km/hr. **(HTA)**

A "power-assisted bicycle" means a vehicle that:

- a. has a handlebar for steering and pedals,*
- b. is designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground,*
- c. can be propelled by muscle power applied to the pedals,*
- d. has an electric motor but no other type of motor, and*
 - i. the motor has a continuous power output rating, measured at its shaft, of 500 W or less,*
 - ii. if engaged by the driver applying muscle power to the pedals, the motor immediately stops providing the vehicle with motive power when the driver stops applying muscle power,*
 - iii. if engaged by a throttle, the motor immediately stops providing the vehicle with motive power when the driver activates a brake, and*
 - iv. the motor cannot provide the vehicle with motive power when it is travelling at more than 32 km/h,*
- e. bears a permanent manufacturer's label stating that the vehicle is a power-assisted bicycle under the Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations, C.R.C., c. 1038, and*
- f. has either*
 - i. a mechanism to turn the electric motor on and off that can be operated by the driver, and if the vehicle has a throttle, is separate from the throttle, or*
 - ii. a mechanism that prevents the motor from engaging until the vehicle is travelling at 3 km/h or more.*

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- When riding a power-assisted bicycle, a helmet must be worn. **(HTA)**

145(4) Helmet required: power-assisted bicycles- No person shall ride on or operate a power-assisted bicycle on a highway or bicycle facility unless he or she is wearing a properly fitted and fastened protective helmet.

- The operator of a power-assisted bicycle must be 14 years of age or older. **(HTA)**

145(2) Minimum operator age: power-assisted bicycles- No person shall operate a power-assisted bicycle on a highway or bicycle facility unless he or she is 14 years of age or older.

- Always use [hand signals](#) when turning and stopping to communicate actions to motorists and ensure intentions are visible and predictable. **(HTA)**

125 (1) The driver of a left-hand drive motor vehicle or the operator of a bicycle, power-assisted bicycle, moped or mobility vehicle giving a hand signal shall do so from the left side of the vehicle and

- a. to signify a left turn, shall extend his or her left arm horizontally from the vehicle;*
- b. to signify a right turn, shall extend his or her left arm from the vehicle with the upper arm horizontal and forearm pointing vertically upward; and*
- c. to signify a stop or a decrease in speed, shall extend his or her left arm from the vehicle with the upper arm horizontal and forearm pointing vertically downward.*

- Cyclists share the road with motorists and should do so with care and caution. Cyclists should remain as close to the curb as *practicable* and always stay to the right unless you are on a one-way street with three or more traffic lanes. **(HTA)**

145 (5) Operation next to curb - A person operating a bicycle or power-assisted bicycle on a highway shall operate it

- a. as closely as practicable to the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway, unless the highway is designated for traffic in one direction and has three or more traffic lanes; or*
- b. as closely as practicable to the right- or left-hand edge or curb of the roadway, if the highway is designated for traffic in one direction and has three or more traffic lanes.*

112(4) Subject to subsection (5), where a driver of a vehicle is proceeding at a slower rate of speed than other traffic he shall

- a. drive in the extreme right hand lane where the roadway has 2 or more lanes; or*
- b. drive as closely as is practicable to the right hand edge or curb of the roadway.*

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- It is dangerous and illegal to ride side by side with other cyclists. Always ride in front of or behind other cyclists and have a safe distance between each rider. **(HTA)**

145 (6) Operation in single file - No person shall operate a bicycle or power-assisted bicycle on a highway beside a moped, mobility vehicle, bicycle or power-assisted bicycle that is operating in the same traffic lane.

- It is illegal and dangerous to cycle on **sidewalks**. Leaving the sidewalk to travel across a roadway poses a significant risk. **(HTA)**

145 (8) Bicycles on sidewalks- Subject to subsection (9), no person shall operate on a sidewalk a bicycle with a rear wheel the diameter of which exceeds 410 mm.

- A white light at the front of a bicycle and a red or amber reflector at the rear of a bicycle are required. Bicycles with a red light at the rear, rather than the required reflector, are much more visible to motorists and other road users. **(HTA)**

149 (1) Lamps and reflectors on bicycles- Subject to subsection (3), a bicycle or power-assisted bicycle shall be equipped with

- a. A headlamp at the front that casts a white light; and*
- b. A lamp or reflector at the back that casts a red or amber light or reflection and has a surface area of not less than 25cm².*

- Never listen to headphones while on a bicycle. You need to be able to hear things around you and be attentive to the road and your surroundings. **(HTA)**

No driver of a motor vehicle or operator of a bicycle shall, while operating the motor vehicle or bicycle on a highway, wear, on both ears, headphones which are used for the purpose of listening to a radio or recording.

- Passing motor vehicles on the right side, along the curb, is both illegal and extremely dangerous. **(HTA)**

115(1) a driver shall not overtake and pass upon the right of another vehicle, except

- a. when the vehicle overtaken is making a left turn or its driver has signalled his intention to make a left turn; or*
- b. when on a laned roadway there are two or more unobstructed lanes available to traffic moving in the direction of travel of the vehicle; or*
- c. upon a one-way roadway, where the roadway is free from obstructions and is of sufficient width for two or more lines of moving vehicles.*

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- Cyclists have the same rights and duties as motorists so both groups need to know and follow the rules of the road. **(HTA)**

145(1) Except as otherwise provided in subsections (5) and (6), a person operating a bicycle or power-assisted bicycle on a highway or bicycle facility has the same rights and duties as a person driving a motor vehicle on a highway and shall obey all signs and traffic control devices, and all directions of a peace officer.

- Don't carry anything on a bicycle that is large enough to affect your balance or ability to maintain safe control of the bicycle. **(HTA)**

147(3) No person shall carry on a bicycle or power-assisted bicycle, or on his or her person while operating or riding on a bicycle or power-assisted bicycle, any object that is of such a size, weight or shape, or is so placed, that it may interfere with the proper operation and control of the vehicle by its operator.

- Just as when driving a motor vehicle, you cannot operate a bicycle when you have been drinking. **(HTA)**

227(1) No person

- a. who is in charge of a vehicle other than a motor vehicle or bicycle, or of a horse or other animal, used as a means of conveyance; and*
- b. who is, through drunkenness, unable to drive or ride it with safety to other persons who are on a highway or bicycle facility;*

shall drive or ride the vehicle, bicycle or animal on a highway or bicycle facility.

Choosing the right bicycle

Types of bicycles

Mountain bicycles and hybrids are well suited for city riding due to their rugged construction, manoeuvrability, upright sitting position, and easy to operate gear shifters and brakes.

However, they are somewhat slower and less efficient for longer distance rides than road bicycles with drop handlebars.

You can visit any bicycle shop to find out what type of bike would best be suited to your riding needs.

Size and fit

A bicycle that is too large or too small for the rider can be difficult to control and manoeuvre. Your bicycle shop should be able to assist in choosing a bike which fits you properly. However, if you already have a bicycle, here are a few things you should check to make sure it's the right fit for you.

- Stand straddling over your bicycle with both feet flat on the ground. There should be at least three to five centimetres between you and the highest point of the top tube.
- Sit on the bicycle with your heel on the pedal. Your leg should be fully extended when the pedal is at the bottom of its stroke. This will leave only a slight bend at the knee when the ball of your foot is positioned on the pedal.
- Sit on the seat and reach for the handlebars. You should have a slight bend in your arms at the elbow. Generally, the height of the bars should be level with the seat.



For further tips on how to select a bicycle that is sized right for you, please check out [this video](#).

Equipment and Safety Gear

Helmets

A simple fall off of your bicycle can result in serious head trauma and even the most experienced riders are at risk of an accident. Fortunately, when worn properly, a helmet can reduce your risk of a head injury by 85 per cent.

How to choose a helmet

Simply wearing a helmet is not enough. It must also fit properly and should be approved by a recognized safety standards organization such as the CSA, Snell, ASTM or ANSI.

A cycling helmet should fit snugly on your head, even with the chin strap undone. Most helmet manufacturers provide a variety of foam pads that can be adjusted to fit a range of head sizes. Once fitted, you should be able to move your head from side to side or back and forth without the helmet tipping off.

To ensure you're visible to motorists, choose a helmet that is bright in colour. The helmet should also provide adequate ventilation to keep you comfortable, even in warmer temperatures.

How to Fit a Helmet - Use the 2-V-1 Rule

Your helmet should sit level on top of your head with no more than a two-finger width above your eyebrow.



The side straps should be adjusted to form a "V" shape, slightly in front of and just below the ears. This is accomplished using sliding or locking clips (see the helmet manufacturer's instruction for specifics on how your helmet clips work).



Adjust the length of the chin strap so that **one finger** fits under the strap. It needs to be snug, but not uncomfortable.

Final Check

Double check to make sure the helmet doesn't rock back and forth when you move your head around. Open your mouth wide and you should feel the helmet pull down on



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your head. If your helmet has a rear stabilizer, adjust it to provide more stability and comfort.

[This video](#) shows you how to fit your helmet properly.

How do I know if my helmet needs replacement?

If your helmet is damaged or its shell has deteriorated, it may be time for a replacement. Helmet standards and quality change over time and many older helmets simply don't meet current requirements.

Helmet manufacturers recommend that you replace your helmet every five years. However, this is highly dependent on usage, care and abuse.

Here are some additional signs that your helmet needs to be replaced:

- If you have been in an accident while wearing your helmet, as damage to the structure of the helmet may not be visible and it's better to be sure.
- If there are cracks or damage to the surface of the plastic shell, since small cracks anywhere on the shell indicate aging and a need for replacement.
- If the shell colour has faded significantly, the plastic portion has likely become brittle.
- If the foam liner has any cracks or if any areas appear compressed or thinner than other areas of the helmet.
- If the straps, buckles or rear stabilizer are damaged or missing.

In addition to a helmet, there are a number of other items you should consider when it comes to outfitting both yourself and your bicycle safely.

Tires

- Always use good tires inflated to their recommended pressure, which is generally found on the sidewall of the tire.
- Narrow tires inflated firmly are easier for pedaling on hard surfaces, while wider tires provide more comfort and traction.
- For off-road use, tire pressure can be reduced to provide better traction and to absorb the impact of uneven surfaces. It's a good idea to regularly check your tires to make sure that they are inflated appropriately for your needs.
- Ask your bicycle shop what type of tire would best suit your cycling needs.

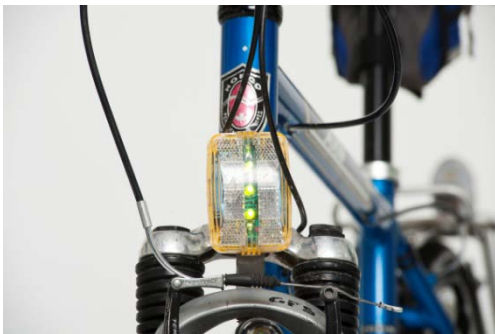
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Brakes

- Brakes must be powerful enough so you can easily stop your bicycle at a moment's notice. You should also be able to quickly and easily reach the brake levers from where your hands are placed on the handlebars.
- Having only one brake in good working condition is dangerous. Make sure both your front and rear brakes work properly and receive regular maintenance from a bicycle mechanic.

Lights and reflectors

- *The Highway Traffic Act* requires that you have a white light on the front of your bicycle and a red or amber reflector on the rear.
- In addition to these requirements, adding a red blinking LED on the rear of your bicycle will greatly increase your visibility. These lights come in a wide variety of styles and can be seen for several kilometres.
- Check with your local bicycle shop for advice on the most appropriate lighting for your needs.



Typical front and rear lights

Reflective clothing

- Wear brightly coloured, reflective clothing (e.g. neon green, yellow and orange), whether riding during the day or at night.
- Wear a safety vest over your clothing to ensure you're ready for all riding conditions.
- Other recommended safety wear includes reflective ankle straps and reflective wrist bands. The constant motion of reflective ankle straps will increase your visibility and attract a driver's attention. Reflective bands on your wrists will make your hand signals more visible.



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Other items

Here are a few other items that you can consider to make your ride safer and more enjoyable:

- **Safety or sun glasses** to reduce glare and protect your eyes from flying debris and dust.
- **Gloves** to increase your grip, especially in wet weather. Gloves can also protect your hands if you fall and make your ride more comfortable.
- **A bell** is useful as a courtesy to alert pedestrians and other road and trail users of your approach. This can be especially important on shared or [multi-use paths](#).
- **A mirror** is a great safety device to use while riding. It allows you to see the traffic in the travel lane beside you and to keep an eye on a riding partner without turning around. But remember – a mirror does not replace the need for shoulder checking before moving over or changing lanes.



- **A tool kit/pump** is a necessity for longer road trips. It is also useful around town to prevent a potentially long walk for minor repairs. A basic tool kit includes: tire levers, spare tire tube, patch kit, pump, screwdriver and multi-purpose tools for adjusting a variety of nuts and bolts.

[Watch this video](#) and learn more about bike equipment and safety gear.

ABC Quick Check

Before you hit the road, use the following ABC Quick Check to ensure your bicycle is safe to ride.

Note: if you discover any problems during this check, take your bicycle to a bike mechanic or complete the repairs as soon as possible.

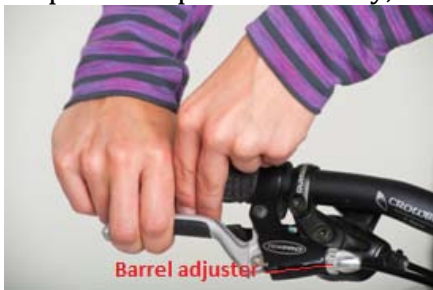
A – is for Air (tires, wheels, etc.)

- Check your tires to ensure they are firmly inflated. Low pressure tires will require you to work much harder and increase your chance of a flat. The recommended tire pressure range is generally found on the side wall of the tire.
- Pick up your bicycle and spin each wheel. It should run straight and not rub the brakes.
- Check to make sure your wheel bearings are tight. Grab the wheel and try to move it from side to side. If there is play in the bearings, you should have the wheel serviced.
- Check your tires for any larger tears or sharp objects.



B – is for Brakes and Bars

- Pull the brake levers tightly towards the bars. You should be able to slide your hand between the lever and hand grip on both sides. If your brake lever pulls all the way back and touches your handlebars, try adjusting the threaded adjustment screws (barrel adjusters). If more than a slight adjustment is needed, take the bicycle to a shop to be repaired. Finally, make sure there are no worn or frayed cables.



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- Check to make sure that the brake pads come in full, flat contact with the rims and do not contact the tires. Brake pads rubbing on the tire can cause a blow out.
- Check to make sure there are no worn or frayed cables.
- Check the brake pads for wear, as riding with worn brake pads decreases your braking power. Brake pads have vertical wear indicators- if these are almost worn away or are not visible, replace the brake pads as soon as possible.
- While standing over your bicycle, pull the front brake fully and rock the bike back and forth. There should not be any play in the bearings of the headset.

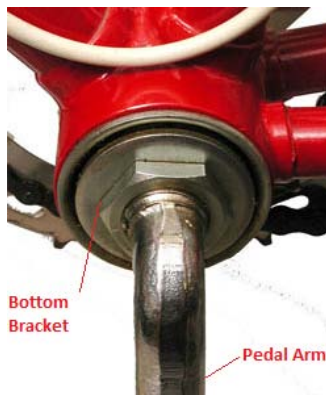


- Stand in front of your bicycle with the front wheel tightly held between your legs. Try and twist the bars from side to side. If the bars twist, you need to tighten the stem. You should not ride the bicycle if the bars move easily.



C – is for Chain and Crank

- Check to make sure your chain is clean, lubricated and running smoothly. A dirty chain will cause increased wear and result in costly repairs. Always remember to use a lubricant designed for bicycles.
- Grab the pedal arm and try to wiggle it towards and away from the frame. There should not be any play in the bearings of the bottom bracket.



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Quick – is for quick releases

- If you have quick releases on your wheels and seat, make sure they are tight and are not easy to open.



- If you do not have quick releases, check to make sure that the wheel bolts are tight and the wheels secure.

Final “Check”

- As a final check, pick your bicycle up 10 cm (three to four inches) off the ground and drop it. If there are any rattles or something falls off, your bike requires attention.

[Watch this video](#) to learn more about quick releases.

Short Version - ABC Quick Check

You may not need to do the full ABC Quick Check each time you ride, but conducting a shortened version is a good habit to get into.

The short version of the ABC Quick Check is performed somewhat in reverse and takes less than a minute to do:

- **Check** - Pick your bike up about 10 cm (three to four inches) off the ground and drop it. Did anything rattle or fall off?
- **Quick** - ***If you have quick releases on your wheels and seat, make sure they are tight and are not easy to open.***
- **C** - Check the chain to ensure that it is well lubricated.
- **B** - Pull both brake levers and make sure that they do not pull all the way back to the handlebars. With both brakes engaged, rock your bike back and forth checking for any play in the steering.
- **A** - Check that both tires are fully inflated.

Watch [this short video](#) about bike maintenance.

[Watch this video](#) about a short inspection of your bike before you ride.

Handling Skills

Learning required cycling skills will greatly increase your safety, comfort and peace of mind when cycling in traffic. Here are some basic skills that all cyclists should learn and practice.

Using Hand signals

Hand signals inform other road users of your intentions and allow them time to react. Always make hand signals well in advance of any turn, not just when you think they are needed. Since making a hand signal requires cycling with only one hand on the handlebars, practice doing that while maintaining a straight line.

Signal well in advance of intersections and put both hands back on the handlebars before you make a turn or change lanes. If you are waiting at an intersection for other vehicles to clear, signal again before starting up to make sure that any vehicles arriving after you originally signalled know your intentions.

Always make sure your signals are specific and clear. Extend your arm fully and point your finger in the direction you are going.



Left turn



Right turn



Stop

The stop signal is often overlooked but is just as important as your turning signals. Motorists approaching from behind are more likely to be cautious and stay further back when they are aware that you intend to stop.

[Watch this video](#) about tips on using hand signals while in traffic.

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Moving Within Your Lane

When you are moving over in the lane to position yourself for a turn, passing parked cars or taking the lane at an intersection, it is best to shoulder check then indicate exactly where you plan to go. Using the normal turn signal can be understood as meaning that you intend to change lanes or turn. By simply pointing over and down to the position you are planning to move to, you clearly indicate your intentions.

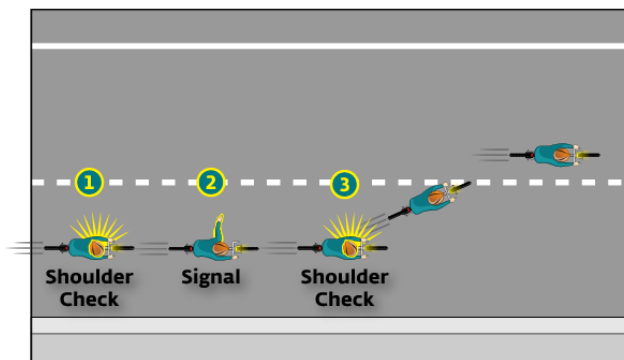


Leaving Your Lane

It is important to always shoulder check both before signalling and again before you actually change lanes.

The proper signalling sequence is:

1. **Shoulder check** to make sure it is safe to put your hand out.
2. Make your **hand signal**.
3. Finally, before making your lane change, **shoulder check** one more time to make sure it is clear; and safe, to change lanes or make your turn.



Bike Safe

Balance and Signalling

Signalling while riding requires you to ride with just one hand on the handlebars while maintaining a straight line. Shoulder checks in particular can cause you to move in the direction that the head is turned, so keep them brief and be sure to practice this cycling skill.

In some situations, the need to keep both your hands on the handlebars can make shoulder checks and signalling difficult or even dangerous. By planning your changes early you will be able to communicate with drivers and avoid manoeuvres without signals.

Cycling in a straight line

Being able to ride in a straight line under varying conditions is one of the keys to riding safely in traffic. You can practice this skill in a parking lot or other quiet location by following a painted line as closely as possible at different speeds. You should also practice riding in a straight line while shoulder checking and signalling, both to the right and to the left. This is not easy at first but is a critically important skill to have when riding in traffic. (Please note that a mirror does not replace the need to shoulder check in any circumstances.)

When riding in traffic, always keep your head up and your eyes focused down the road. This will help you maintain a straight line and make you aware of the traffic conditions ahead of you.

Stopping

On a bicycle with hand brakes, the front brake accounts for up to 80 per cent of the stopping power during abrupt braking because forward momentum puts most of your weight over the front wheel. For optimum stopping power, shift your weight toward the rear and try to keep your centre of gravity low. The weight shift will allow you to maximize your rear braking without skidding. At the same time, progressively increase the braking in the front, being careful not to shift your weight forward.

In a safe area, practice stopping as quickly as you can to get a feel for how much pressure you can apply to each brake. Start slowly at first and then try it at increased speeds.

[Watch this video](#) for tips on stopping techniques.

Gear shifting

The basic rule is that low gears are for slow speeds and high gears are for fast speeds. Always shift into a low, easy gear before you stop and in advance of hills. On level ground, use a gear that gives you a fast, comfortable spin.

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Peddalling in a gear that is too high can tire you more quickly, while pedalling in a gear that is too low can strain your knees and lower back.

[Watch this video](#) *about tips on shifting gears.*

Build confidence

By practicing and mastering these skills, you can build confidence and avoid potential conflicts on the road.

Traffic Skills – The Fundamentals

The key to cycling safely in traffic is riding confidently and being aware of your surroundings.

- Think and plan your next 30 seconds.
- Observe the traffic ahead, behind and around you.
- Anticipate dangers and what other road users may do.

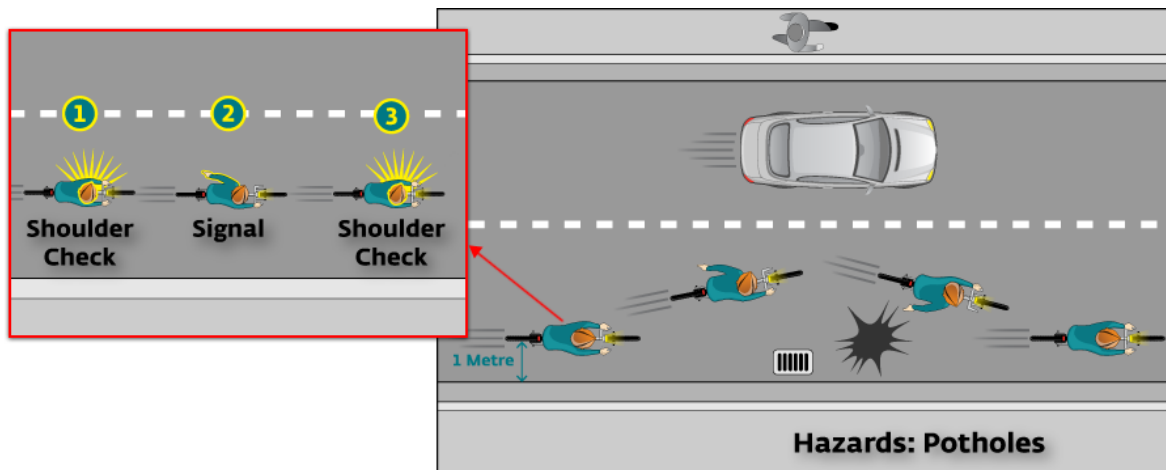
Watch [this short video](#) and learn more about cycling in traffic.

There are several key factors that you must remember at all times when cycling in traffic:

- **Alertness** – You must ride defensively and be alert at all times. You are vulnerable and any collision, no matter how small, is potentially serious.
- **Manoeuvrability** - You need room to manoeuvre while avoiding hazards that exist along the roadway.
- **Predictability** – Motorists cannot read your mind. Weaving in and out of parked cars or making sudden changes in direction without signalling confuses them. Choosing the right position on the road can also help cyclists and motorists share the road safely.
- **Visibility** – Being visible is about what you wear and how you ride. Whether you are riding at night or during the day, be sure to wear bright, reflective clothing. Always stay in the motorists' field of vision and avoid dodging in and out of traffic or parked vehicles.
- **Communication** - Appropriate signalling alerts other road users of your intentions. Plan your manoeuvres early and communicate all of them, including stopping.

Basic Road Positioning

- Experienced cyclists recommend riding approximately one metre (or three feet) from the curb to maintain a straight line while avoiding hazards such as potholes, wide cracks, service covers, debris and puddles. However, it's important to know that *The Highway Traffic Act* does not define “as close as practicable”, so to avoid unnecessary conflicts with motorists, you need to use your best judgment when determining how far away from the curb to ride and when it may be necessary to move closer to the middle of the lane.
- If you ride too close to the curb, you run the risk of being forced to move to the left to avoid hazards. This can result in a sudden unpredictable swerve as you move over into the path of other traffic.
- Always keep your eyes focused on the road ahead of you, watching carefully for these hazards. If you have to move over into traffic to avoid one, look over your shoulder first and use your hand signals to communicate your change of position. Avoid swerving abruptly into traffic – it can easily lead to a collision.



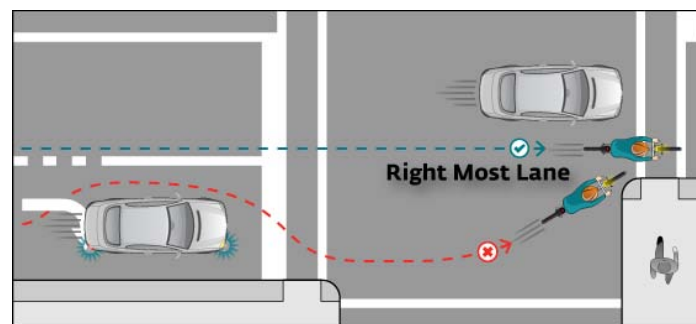
In some situations where road or traffic conditions dictate, experienced cyclists suggest you may be safest riding closer to the centre of the lane. There are several conditions under which this is advisable:

- Where the lane width is too narrow for a motorist to share the lane with the cyclist.
- Where there are poor road conditions along the right side, such as debris or puddles.
- In construction zones where lane widths are reduced or where only one lane remains.
- When you are traveling at the same speed as the rest of traffic.
- At intersections (further clarification under [intersections](#)).

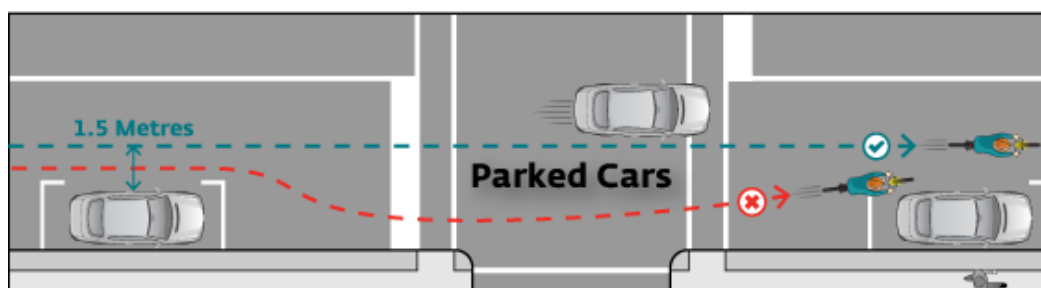
Destination Positioning

Destination positioning is planning and getting to the appropriate location on the roadway in a manner that will clearly inform other road users where you are going. It makes you more **visible** and **predictable**, two of the most important elements of safe cycling.

- **The right-most lane** – you should always be in the right-most lane or position that takes you where you want to go.
- **Right-turn-only lanes** – there are some situations when your destination requires you to move from the right-most lane. One example is the right-turn-only lane. If you're travelling through an intersection, you shouldn't enter or remain in the right-turn-only lane. Motorists will assume that you're turning right and, by continuing through the intersection, you become unpredictable and must still re-enter the traffic flow on the other side of the intersection. Instead, position yourself in the appropriate lane to the left (using hand signals) and remain visible in the motorists' field of vision.



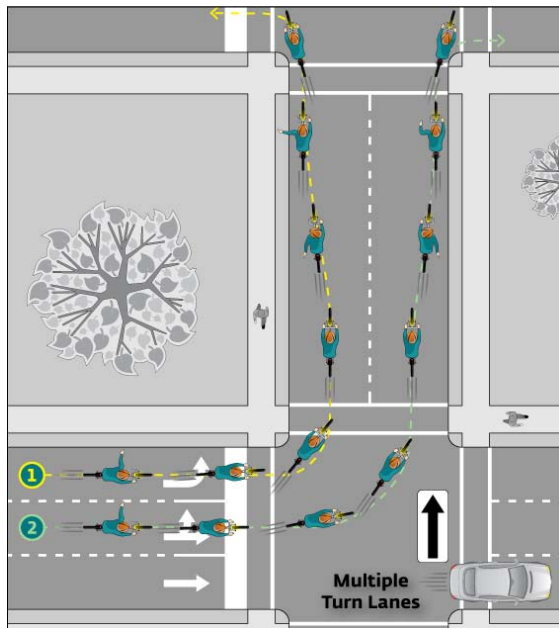
- **Parked cars** – another example of destination positioning is when parked cars exist on either side of an intersection. If you're planning to continue straight, you should continue riding in a straight line and not weave to the right. Remember to stay in the motorists' field of vision, be predictable and stay out of the door zone. Experienced cyclists recommend riding one and a half metres from parked cars, although *The Highway Traffic Act* does not specify the distance.



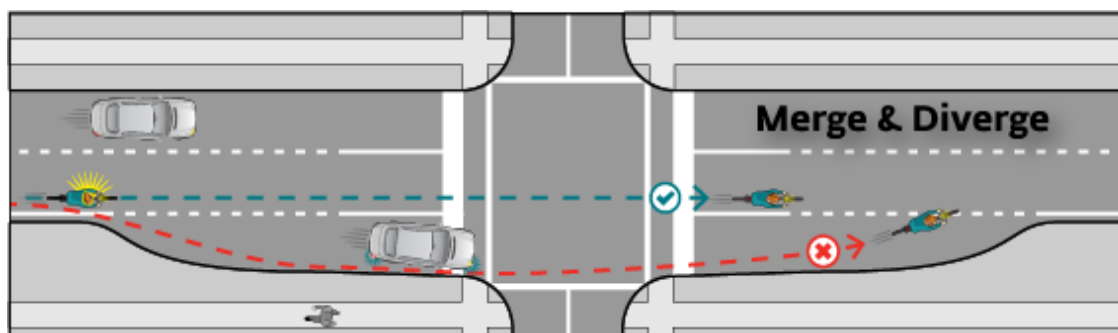
- **Multiple-turn lanes** – when there is more than one turn lane, you should pick the lane best suited to your destination. Referring to the diagram below, if you're turning left at the intersection, choose the right-most turn lane in order to arrive in

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the right-most lane after the turn (**path 2**). However, if you're planning to turn left again at the intersection after your initial turn, you are better positioned in the inside or left-most turn lane (**path 1**). This will allow you to arrive on the left side after your first turn, already positioned to make your second turn at the next intersection.



- **Merge and diverge** – unless you plan on turning, you shouldn't enter merge-and-diverge lanes. When in this situation (as per the diagram below), you should instead remain in the motorists' field of vision so there is no confusion about your destination. A brief shoulder check just before reaching the diverge lane will also alert the driver that you do not intend to turn right.



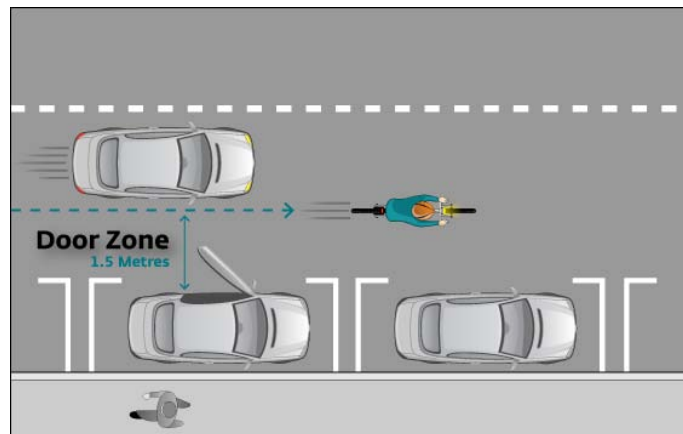
Parked cars – the “Door Zone”

Passing parked cars can represent a significant hazard for you as a cyclist. A car door can cause serious injury and result in your being thrown into the adjacent lane of traffic. You must be alert to both opening doors and motor vehicles pulling into or out of parking spots.

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Experienced cyclists recommend riding one and a half metres from parked cars, although *The Highway Traffic Act* does not specify the distance. Cyclists need to exercise good judgment, when determining how much space to leave, to stay safe.

Where cars are parked intermittently, ride in a straight line instead of swerving in and out between them. This increases your visibility and predictability for other motorists on the road.



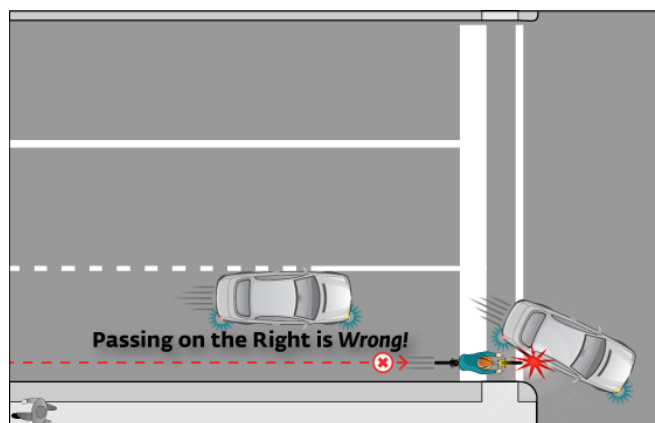
Intersections

In Manitoba, approximately 45 per cent of bicycle and vehicle collisions occur at intersections. Many of these collisions could be avoided by following the rules and the key elements of safe riding, which include **manoeuvrability, visibility, predictability, and communication**. As a cyclist, you need to be alert at intersections and, in particular, aware of turning vehicles.

When stopping at lights or stop signs, you need to position yourself to allow sufficient space to manoeuvre. Regardless of how experienced you are, all cyclists will move from side to side as they start up. While *The Highway Traffic Act* only specifies riding as close as practicable to the (right) edge of a roadway, experienced cyclists recommend moving closer to the middle of the lane when stopped at a light or stop sign (to maximize your visibility and allow the space needed during start up). Once you have enough momentum to maintain a straight line, shoulder check and move back to the right side.

When stopped at an intersection, never position yourself with your foot on the curb as it encourages motorists to “squeeze” up beside you. This can result in the driver turning right across your path as you both proceed from the intersection. This is called the “right hook.”

Passing motor vehicles on the right side, along the curb, is both illegal and very dangerous. If you are on the right side of a vehicle, you may not be able to see the motorist’s turn signal and the motorist likely won’t be able to see you either.



A cyclist travelling straight through an intersection should remain in the right most position on the road. However, it is advisable to shoulder check as you approach the intersection for any motor vehicles that might be close behind or attempting to pass by.

When approaching an intersection where several motor vehicles are either slowing or stopped, the best option is to remain in the right lane and wait for the vehicles to clear before proceeding. **Passing on the right is not an option.**

Bike Safe

Because intersections can be dangerous for cyclists, there are a few other items that you should consider:

- Treat every driveway and back lane as an intersection and never assume that the motorist has seen you.
- Don't enter an intersection on a yellow light. Remember that lights are timed for motor vehicles, not bicycles.

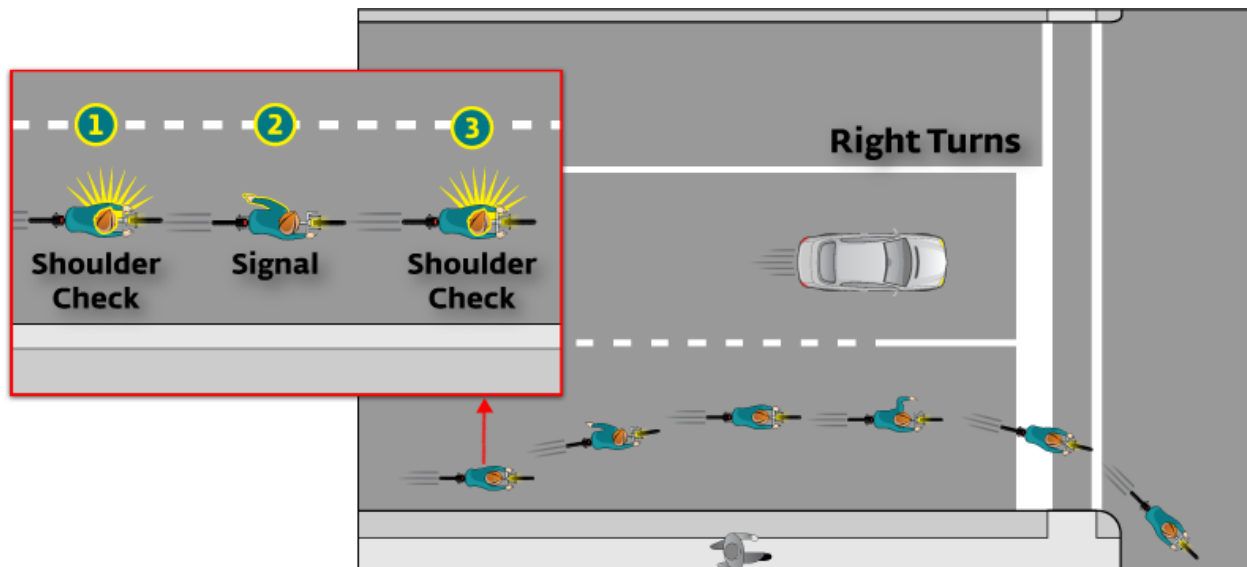
At a four-way stop, the first vehicle to stop is the first to proceed. If you arrive at the same time as a motorist, let them proceed first and avoid any possible confusion. While *The Highway Traffic Act* only specifies riding as close as practicable to the (right) edge of a roadway, experienced cyclists recommend moving closer to the middle of the lane when approaching a yield (to maximize your visibility). Once you have completed the turn, move back to the right edge.

Turns

Cyclists need to be proactive and assertive and should always plan turns in advance, especially on multi-lane roadways. Appropriate positioning and communication with motorists at intersections can make turns safe. When making turns, use [hand signals](#) well in advance so the vehicles behind you know your intentions.

Right Turns

While *The Highway Traffic Act* only specifies riding as close as practicable to the (right) edge of a roadway, when beginning a right turn, experienced cyclists recommend signalling and moving closer to the middle of the right-most lane (to maximize your visibility). Be sure to maintain that position and follow the same path that a motor vehicle would take until you have completed the turn. Once the turn is completed, signal and return to the right-most practicable position.



Left Turns

Left turns are more complicated, take more planning and require you to move over into active traffic lanes. Never make a left turn from the right side of the road.

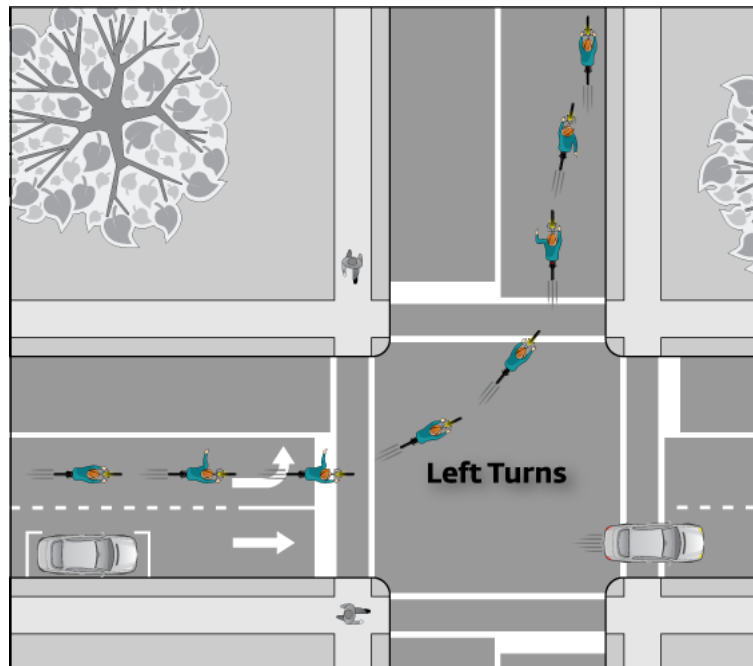
Remember to shoulder check well in advance to determine the best opportunity to change lanes. You may have to shoulder check several times before signalling and changing lanes.

- After signalling, and when the coast is clear, begin moving to the left to position yourself for a left turn.
- While *The Highway Traffic Act* only specifies riding as close as practicable to the (right) edge of a roadway, experienced cyclists recommend signalling and moving

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closer to the center of the left turning lane. This position ensures your visibility and prevents other vehicles behind from passing on the left or right.

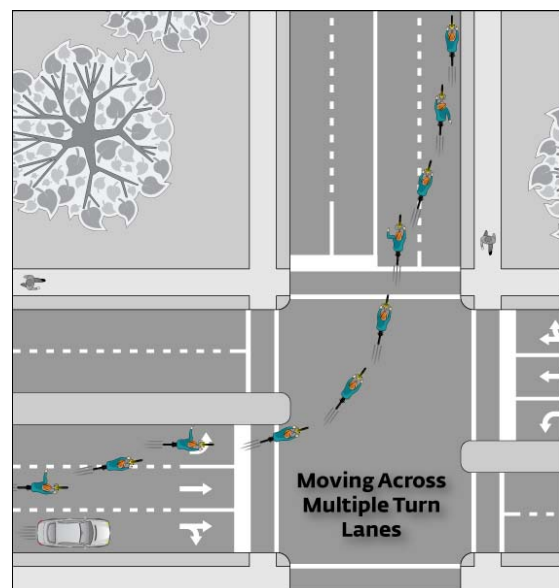
- Check oncoming traffic, including any vehicles turning right onto the same road you are entering.
- Once on-coming traffic is clear, make your left turn following the same path that a motor vehicle would take, arriving in the center of the lane. Once established after the turn, signal and return to the right-most practicable position.



Moving across multiple lanes

On multi-lane roadways, you must plan your turns well in advance as you may have to negotiate your position gradually across the lanes. When traffic conditions permit, you can make multiple lane changes in one smooth transition. If necessary, slow down and wait for traffic to clear before making a lane change.

When turning onto a roadway with multiple lanes, always travel from left lane to left lane (inside to inside). Once you have completed the turn, be sure to shoulder check, signal and move over one lane at a time until you establish the appropriate position along the right side.

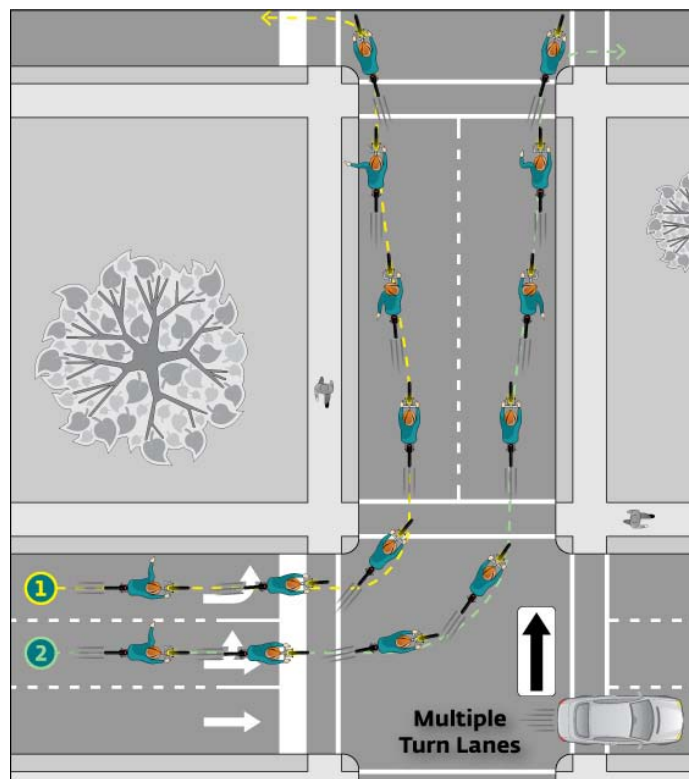


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Multiple Turn Lanes

When faced with more than one turn lane, you must pick the lane best suited to your destination. For instance, if you are turning left at the intersection, chose the right most turn lane in order to arrive in the right most lane (**path 2**) after the turn (see example below).

However, if you are planning a second left turn at the next intersection after your first turn, you would be better positioned in the inside or left most turn lane (**path 1**). You would then arrive on the left side after the initial turn, already positioned to make your next turn, only one block away.



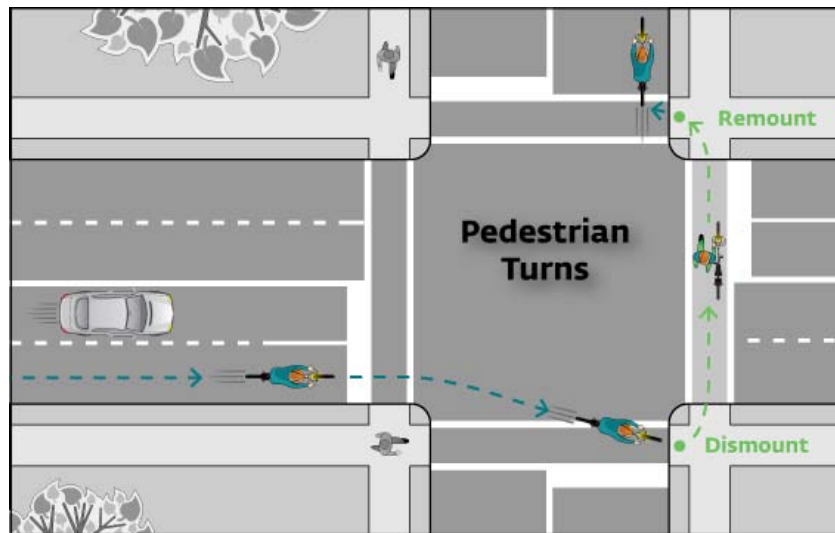
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Pedestrian Turns

A pedestrian turn is an alternative that you can use in the event you're unable to negotiate the appropriate lane changes to make a turn. In situations where traffic is heavy or high speed, a pedestrian turn can be the safest option.

To make a pedestrian turn, proceed straight through the intersection on the right and dismount on the other side. From there, you will be able to walk across the roadway as a pedestrian. Once on the other side of the roadway, you can remount and proceed when traffic conditions permit.

Remember that cyclists (with wheel diameter over 41 cm or 16 inches) are not permitted to ride on a crosswalk.



Large vehicles

Drivers of large vehicles such as buses, trucks and motor homes have large blind spots which prevent them from seeing cyclists. Quite simply, if you cannot see the driver in their mirrors, then they cannot see you. Cyclists should avoid riding in these blind spots and only pass slow moving vehicles on the left.

In urban areas, be sure to watch for right-turning buses and tractor-trailers since their length and rear overhang require more space than you might expect. Large vehicles will often move toward the left lane in preparation for a right turn. The most dangerous point in a turn is when the tractor has made the turn, but the trailer has not. Never pass on the right unless you have a lane to yourself and are positive they are not preparing for a right turn.

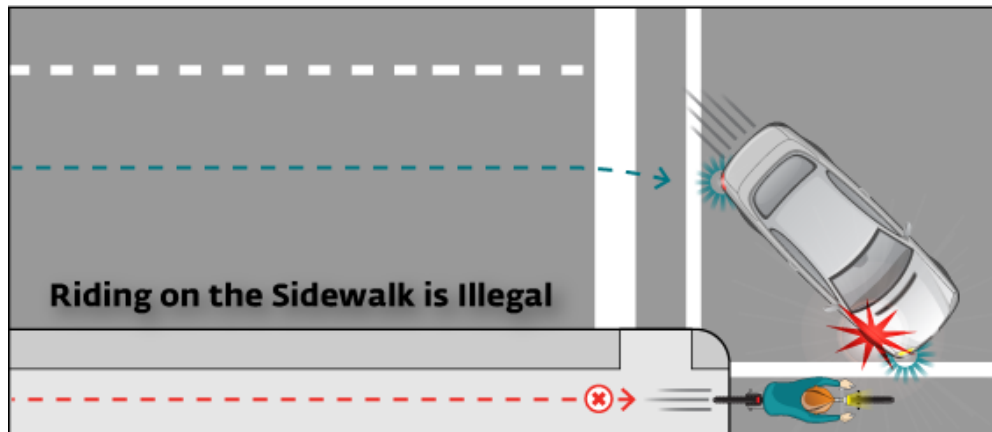
Travelling in the same lane as a bus can be dangerous if you are constantly passing each other. In heavy traffic it is difficult for the bus to switch lanes to pass you, so always be courteous and remain behind the bus.

Large vehicles traveling at high speeds create varying degrees of air turbulence that can cause you to be pulled into the path of passing vehicles. On high-speed highways, you may also encounter commercial vehicles with tandem trailers. Use extra caution to avoid being pulled into the space between them. Never assume it is safe to adjust your road position until a large vehicle has passed you entirely and you have completed a shoulder check. Be especially cautious in windy conditions where the draft can be magnified by the wind-blocking action of the trailer.

Drivers of certain types of vehicles such as motor homes and rental moving vans are often less experienced than commercial drivers. Be prepared for these drivers to underestimate the length and width of their vehicles and give them a wide berth.

Riding on sidewalks

It is against the law to ride on sidewalks unless the diameter of your rear wheel is 410 millimetres (16 inches) or less. Several studies have proven that cyclists on sidewalks face a far greater collision risk than cyclists on the roadway. The main danger points are intersections where you may surprise motorists by appearing unexpectedly due to your speed on a sidewalk.



Uncontrolled intersections such as back lanes, driveways and access to strip malls are of particular concern. In many cases, the view for both the approaching motorist and yourself is obstructed. As there are no traffic controls, the motorist is not required to come to a full stop and, if an obstruction exists, they will have to move past the sidewalk to see the roadway traffic. The entrance and exits to strip malls are particularly dangerous because they are often on an angle, which makes it more difficult to see a fast moving bike approaching.

Sidewalks are primarily for use by pedestrians. These pedestrians include unpredictable children, mobility impaired individuals and older adults who may be startled easily. Riding on the sidewalk creates an unsafe environment for everyone.

Bike Safe

Biking at Night

The key to safe night cycling is remaining visible. Dawn and dusk are especially dangerous times to ride because of reduced visibility.



Lighting

According to *The Highway Traffic Act*, you must have a white light at the front of your bicycle and a red or amber reflector at the rear of your bike to ensure high visibility. However, having a red tail light at the rear of your bike, rather than the required reflector, makes you much more visible to motorists and other road users. Generally, blinking lights are more effective at getting motorists' attention than a solid beam.



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Reflective Options

Due to their constant motion, it is highly recommended you place pedal reflectors or reflective bands around your ankles to provide a reflective option that is highly noticeable. Wearing reflective bands on your wrists can make hand signals more visible, while white reflective strips on the sides of your front fork and chain stays will add to your visibility for vehicles approaching from right angles. Additionally, make sure that your bike is equipped with wheel reflectors to increase your visibility from the side.



Clothing

Because bright colours like yellow and white stand out well at night, it is highly recommended you wear them when riding your bicycle. You can also increase your visibility at night by placing reflective material on your clothing or wearing a reflective vest.

Watch [this short video](#) about riding at night.

Weather Hazards

Rain and snow can make roads slippery, especially after a long dry period. You should always adjust your riding accordingly and leave extra room for manoeuvring and stopping.

Always ride defensively and make sure your bike is equipped with a headlight and a rear light or reflectors. You can also increase your visibility by wearing brightly coloured and reflective clothing.

Brakes work less effectively when they are wet, especially during the initial exposure to wet conditions. If possible, test their stopping power on a quiet street prior to heading into heavier and faster traffic. Dry your brakes by feathering (applying them lightly) before you need to stop or slow down.

Since you will have less traction in poor weather conditions, be sure to turn more slowly and avoid manhole covers and painted road line markings, as these are particularly slippery when wet.

You should also avoid puddles when possible, since they may hide potholes, broken glass or other hazards.

Cold weather is often accompanied by frost, snow and black ice, which all reduce traction dramatically. Remember that two wheels do not slide in the same manner as four wheels and a bicycle is likely to slide out from under you on ice. Whenever traction is reduced, be sure to cycle more slowly and cautiously, especially at intersections. Using wider tires with lower air pressure can help.

Black ice is particularly dangerous since it is hard to see and can suddenly eliminate your grip on the road. It is most common on bridges, metal surfaces and brick roads.

In a typical Manitoba winter with low temperatures and high wind chill values, frostbite can be a serious problem. Wear warm layered clothing and be particularly careful to protect your head, ears, hands and feet.

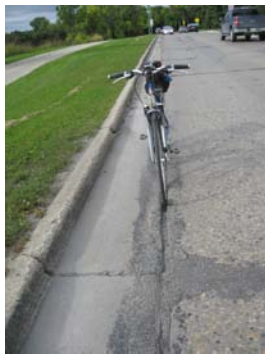
Other Hazards

Underpasses

Road conditions in an underpass can be particularly rough and require you to be extra alert. Uneven surfaces and large potholes are common and are further complicated by your increased speed as you descend into the underpass. It is advised that cyclists move further away from the edge of the road to allow more room for [manoeuvrability](#).

Longitudinal Cracks

Roadway cracks or joints running parallel to the road also represent a significant hazard. These cracks are often quite wide and uneven and can easily trap a tire, sending you over the handlebars. **You should avoid riding too close to these cracks.**



Sewer Grates and Covers

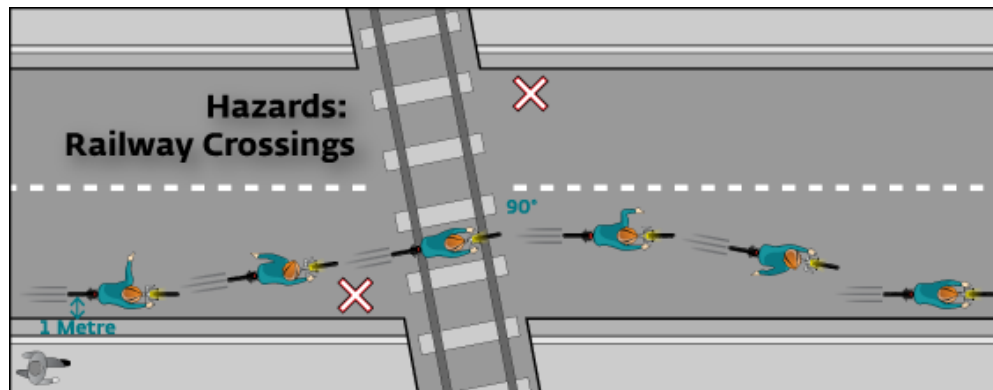
Even though most sewer grates and covers are located along the edge of the road, they can still create a hazard for cyclists. These structures are occasionally located further out from the road edge and may have a circular joint that extends well into your path. **You should be alert to sewer grates, in particular those with openings running parallel to the roadway.**



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Railway Crossings

Railway tracks that cross at an angle to the roadway can trap your tire and cause you to fall off your bicycle. Always adjust your position and alignment in order to cross the tracks at a right angle. Make sure you shoulder check and signal. To reduce the impact, lift yourself slightly off the seat and use your legs as shock absorbers.



Bicycle Safety For Your Kids

Bicycle riding is a terrific activity for children and a great opportunity for families to be active together. It's fun, gets us outdoors and builds strong, healthy bodies.

But before your children put their feet to the pedal, you need to make sure they have the necessary skills to do so safely. Read on to find out what you need to know to keep your children safe on their bicycles.

[Watch this video](#) about tips on how to teach your child to ride a bike.

The facts about child bicycling

- According to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 88 per cent of Canadian children owned a bicycle in 2004.
- Most cycling injuries to children are due to the high speeds reached by riders, lack of experience in controlling the bicycle and lack of protective gear.
- A child's riding behaviour and road safety skills are found to be a factor in more than 50 per cent of cycling deaths.
- Each year, bike collisions with automobiles kill about nine children in Canada and result in over 800 hospitalizations, some to intensive care.
- Head injuries are the cause of 80 per cent of child cycling deaths and 28 per cent of child hospital admissions for cycling injuries. Even seemingly minor head injuries can cause permanent brain damage.
- The most common children's bicycle injury is a broken bone.
- Most children who are seriously injured or killed are hit by a motor vehicle.

The good news is that these deaths and injuries are preventable

- Make sure that you and your children wear an approved, properly fitted bicycle helmet on every ride. A bicycle helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by more than 85 per cent.
- Frequently ride with your child and model proper behaviour. Practice road safety rules and obey all traffic laws.
- Teach your child proper [hand signals](#).
- Adult supervision of child cyclists is essential until you're sure your child has good traffic skills and judgment. Before allowing your children to ride alone, ensure that they understand the rules and display safe riding techniques.
- Keep brakes and other parts in good working order.
- Poor visibility adds to the risk of a collision between a bicycle and a car. When cycling, children should wear easy to see, bright clothing.
- Children should not ride a bicycle at night or in other low-light conditions (e.g., when it's foggy). If riding at night is unavoidable, the bicycle should be equipped

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with lights and reflectors, and children should wear bright coloured, reflective clothing.

- Make sure that your child's bicycle is the right size for them. See sizing guide (below) or go to a local bicycle shop for more information.

Sizing a Child's Bicycle

Sizing of a child's bicycle is different than sizing for an adult. As a general rule of thumb, the sizing of bicycles for children is based on their age and inseam measurement.

- Children aged 2-4 with a height of 26-34" and an inseam measurement of 14-17" should ride a bicycle with a wheel size of 12".
- Children aged 4-8 with a height of 34-42" and an inseam measurement of 16-22" should ride a bicycle with a wheel size of 14" or 16". (e.g. taller kids should have a bicycle with larger wheels and may even need the 18" wheel).
- Children aged 6-9 with a height of 42-48" and an inseam measurement of 20-24" should have a bicycle with 18" wheels.
- Children aged 8+ with a height of 48+" and an inseam of 20+" should have a bicycle with 20" wheels or larger.

Helmet use:

- Never allow your children to ride without helmets. And always remember: you are your child's best role model, so ensure you wear a helmet when you ride.
- Make sure your children are wearing an approved helmet. Helmets sold in Canada are certified by CSA (Canadian Standards Association), CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission), Snell or ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials).
- Helmets should be bright in colour and fit snugly. The helmet should sit level on the head covering the forehead with the rim just above the eyebrows.
- If your child's helmet is more than five years old or has been hit hard by any object, it should be replaced.
- See [Equipment and safety gear – helmets](#) for more information.

For more information:

Visit [Safe Kids Canada](#) or call 1-888-SAFE-TIPS (723-3847)

If you wish to download a PDF of the "I Cycle Safely" booklet, please [click here](#).

Active Transportation and Cycling Infrastructure

In recent years, awareness of active transportation and the demand for better cycling facilities has seen the development of several new types of infrastructure. But don't forget that this new infrastructure cannot take cyclists everywhere and you still need to share the road with motorists. Understanding how to use and share these new facilities, particularly road infrastructure, is vital to ensuring the safety of all road users.

This section will explain how to properly navigate:

- Diamond Lanes
- Graham Avenue Transit Mall
- Bike Lanes
- Contra Flow Bike Lanes
- Sharrows
- Multi-use Paths
- Bike Boulevards
- Traffic Calming Circles and Roundabouts
- Raised Pedestrian Walkways
- Bump Outs

Diamond Lanes

Diamond lanes are specifically reserved for buses, cyclists and emergency vehicles. They were created as a means of increasing both the speed and reliability of transit service, while providing a safe lane for cyclists to ride.

Motorists can only enter a diamond lane to make right turns. They can enter the diamond lane at any point in the block preceding the intersection where the turn is to be made. Once a vehicle enters a diamond lane, they must turn right at the next intersection.

When can you use diamond lanes?

Some diamond lanes are in effect all the time, while others are reserved for certain days and times. Signage is placed along the designated routes to inform users when these laws are enforced.



Bike Safe

Cyclists in the Diamond Lane

Cyclists are permitted to use these lanes during designated times. However, when sharing a lane with a bus, there are a few considerations to remember:

- Experienced cyclists recommend riding closer to the middle of the diamond lane, as sharing the lane side-by-side with buses is dangerous. However, *The Highway Traffic Act* does not specifically permit cyclists to use the diamond lanes in this manner. Be sure to exercise good judgment when deciding whether it's practical to ride away from the right side of the road and closer to the middle of the lane.
- Since buses make frequent stops, always slow down and remain behind the bus unless you are able to maintain sufficient speed to stay in front of it.

Graham Avenue Transit Mall

Graham Avenue in downtown Winnipeg is closed between Fort Street and Carlton Street and has been designated as a transit mall. Motorists are not permitted on the transit mall but cycling is allowed. **Passing along this corridor is strictly prohibited and can be very dangerous, especially at rush hour.**



Bike Safe

Bike Lanes

These on-road painted lanes are intended to provide cyclists with a defined space and help organize the flow of traffic. Bike lanes can encourage cyclists to use their bikes as transportation and help to reduce the number of cyclists riding on sidewalks. They are also a visual sign to motorists that cyclists have a right to the road.



Stay Alert

Even in a bike lane, cyclists must stay alert to both motor vehicles and road conditions. Motor vehicles still occupy space on both sides of you and are able to cross a bike lane at any time.

Motor Vehicles Crossing the Lane

Most bike lanes are located to the left of the parking lane and, as a result, require motorists to cross the bike lane when entering or leaving a parking spot. Motorists must also cross the bike lane when turning at an intersection, lane or driveway. **You need to stay alert for motorists crossing your path, in particular at any intersections.**



Where to Ride

Again, your position within a bike lane is not determined by the center of the painted diamond. You must determine your best position based on the conditions that exist. For instance, although *The Highway Traffic Act* does not specify the distance you should keep from parked cars, to avoid being hit by an opening door, cycling advocacy groups recommend that you should maintain a 1.5 meter clearance from parked cars, at all times. Always exercise good judgment to stay safe.



It is common to see joints or cracks running parallel to a bike lane, sometimes right down the center. These joints can be quite wide and, combined with uneven edges, present a significant hazard. Use good judgment in deciding where it is safe to ride.

When required, you may have to use the adjacent traffic lane. However, you should only do this when traffic permits and after shoulder checking and signalling.

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Turns and lane changes

Cyclists are not limited to the use of a bike lane when it is provided. While the bike lane offers a defined space for cyclists, there are times when you may have to leave the bike lane in order to change lanes, make a turn or leave the roadway. **The solid line on each side of the lane does not mean you cannot leave the bike lane.** Always plan your moves well in advance, ensure that you shoulder check and signal before moving out of the bike lane.

The beginning and the end of bike lanes

Bike lanes can begin and end abruptly without any warning or signage. In some cases, the bike lane may end and change to a [sharrow due to road width](#). In other cases, the bike lane may end and force you to re-enter the flow of traffic. Cyclists **must constantly be aware of conditions ahead of you in order to adapt to changing circumstances and infrastructure.**



Bike lane ends and cyclist enters traffic flow



Bike lane ends and sharrow begins on the right



Bike lane alignment change

Bridges and Underpasses

Some bridges and underpasses have marked bike lanes, which are generally located immediately adjacent to the right edge. Experienced cyclists recommend keeping at least one metre distance from the right edge, especially if there is not sufficient width for manoeuvrability or if debris is scattered on the road. However, *The Highway Traffic Act* does not define “as close as practicable”, so to avoid unnecessary conflicts with motorists, always use your best judgment when determining how far away from the right edge to ride.

Most bridges have “shy lanes” along the right side. A shy lane is a road marking on a bridge, tunnel or underpass that indicates the vehicle lane is safely away from the barrier. These should not be mistaken for bike lanes and experienced cyclists recommend you maintain a minimum one meter clearance from the edge or barrier.



Bike Lane

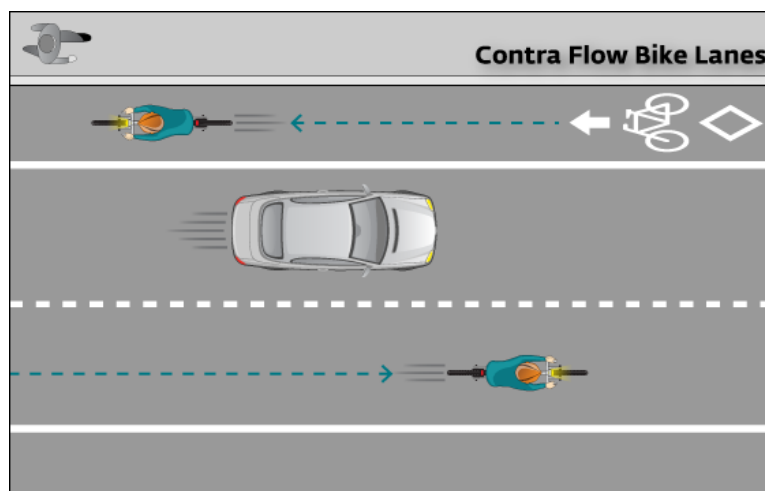


Shy lane - not a Bike Lane

Contra Flow Bike Lanes

Contra-flow bike lanes allow cyclists to travel in the opposite direction of motor vehicles, usually on one-way streets. You must be cautious in these bike lanes, especially at intersections.

However, when riding in the same direction as motorized traffic, you should not ride in the contra-flow bike lane.

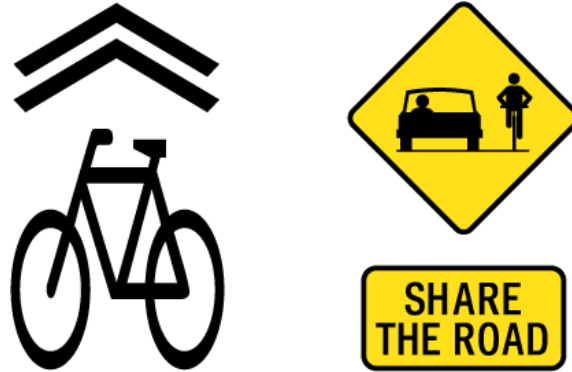


Sharrows

Sharrows are pavement markings painted on the roadway to encourage cyclists and motorists to “share the road”. They are generally intended for use on roadways with lanes wide enough for “side-by-side” bicycle and vehicle operation.

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Motorists should always pass cyclists at a “safe distance” and cyclists should never pass motor vehicles on the right side. These markings are not a **bike lane** and should not be treated as such. Be sure to stay alert to both motor vehicles and road conditions at all times.



This is a sharrow marking

Share the Lane

While it may be intuitive to ride down the center of the arrow, the sharrow marking simply indicates cyclists and motorists are to share the lane and is not an indication of where to ride within the lane. Remember, *The Highway Traffic Act* specifies that you are to ride as close as practicable to the right edge of the roadway.

Intersection

When approaching an [intersection](#), consider moving to the center of the lane in order to improve visibility. Be sure to allow sufficient manoeuvring space for starting up again.

Hazards

Since sharrows are generally placed along the right side of the roadway, cyclists must stay alert for potholes, wide cracks, service covers, debris and other potential hazards. In some cases, avoiding these hazards can require you to move further to the left. Always shoulder check and signal before moving over.

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Parking on the sharrow

In locations where parking or loading is permitted on a roadway, motor vehicles are allowed to park over the sharrow markings. Experienced cyclists recommend keeping at least 1.5 metres distance from parked cars to avoid being hit by an open door. *The Highway Traffic Act* does not specify this so be sure to exercise good judgment to stay safe.



Multi-use Paths

Multi-use paths are physically separated from roadways and are intended for use by a variety of individuals, including cyclists, pedestrians and rollerbladers. Courtesy and communication are keys to using these paths.

Watch [this short video](#) and learn more about riding on multi-use paths.]

Be Courteous

Bicycles travel much faster than most users on these paths so it's important that you be courteous. Always slow down when passing other users and watch carefully for children and dogs as they can be unpredictable and cross your path without warning.

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Communicate

A bell on your bicycle is a great way to communicate with others on the path. However, be aware that many people also use headphones while they walk or jog down the path and, as a result, cannot hear your voice or your bell as you approach. In some cases you may have to ride off the side of the path in order to give others sufficient clearance and ensure safety.

Start and Stop

Shared use paths often begin and end at roadways and users are often required to cross roadways as well. Always ensure that you signal any turns onto these paths and come to a full stop before exiting onto a roadway.



Stay Alert

When riding on a shared-use path, always be alert for other users and the conditions on the trail. Certain paths change from a paved surface to a gravel surface and, in some cases, the gravel can be quite coarse and difficult to ride on. Additionally, paved paths often contain

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many of the same hazards you experience on the road, including debris, potholes, uneven surfaces and wide cracks.



Bike Path Signage

Many shared-use paths are marked with signage indicating “Bike Path.” However, these signs do not mean that the path is for the cyclist’s sole use. The signage simply allows the use of these paths by bicycles.

Bike Boulevards

Bike boulevards, or bikeways, are low speed shared roadways that have a variety of traffic calming measures to reduce motor vehicle speeds. These measures include traffic circles, raised intersections, bump outs or simple speed bumps. Traffic calming creates a quieter and safer environment for both pedestrians and cyclists by reducing motor vehicle speeds.

Traffic calming circles and roundabouts

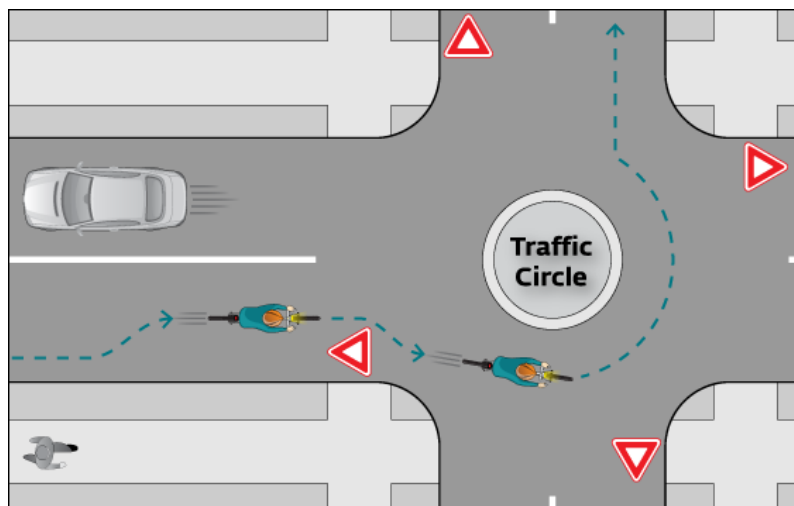
Traffic circles are an effective means of reducing traffic speeds.

Cyclists and motorists must travel through the circle in a counter-clockwise direction, entering and exiting the circle on the right. A cyclist or motorist already in the circle has the right of way. If a cyclist and motorist arrive at the same time, the vehicle to the right has the right of way (similar to a four way stop).

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How to drive a traffic circle

1. Slow your speed as you approach the intersection.
2. Watch for pedestrians and cyclists. Be prepared to stop in advance of the sidewalk if pedestrians are crossing.
3. Yield to circulating traffic already in the intersection, on your left.
4. If arriving at the intersection at the same time, yield to vehicles on the right, allowing them to enter the intersection first.
5. When clear, enter and keep to the right of the center island and travel around the traffic circle in a counter-clockwise direction.
6. Upon reaching your exit street, signal a right turn. Watch for pedestrians and cyclists as you exit.



Since these traffic circles are a single lane in width, experienced cyclists recommend adjusting your position closer to the center of the lane before the traffic circle and holding that position as you travel through. Once you exit, return immediately to the most practicable position on the road. Remember, *The Highway Traffic Act* does not specifically permit cyclists to travel in the middle of a traffic calming circle or roundabout lane, so you need to exercise good judgment when making any decision.

Raised Pedestrian Walkway

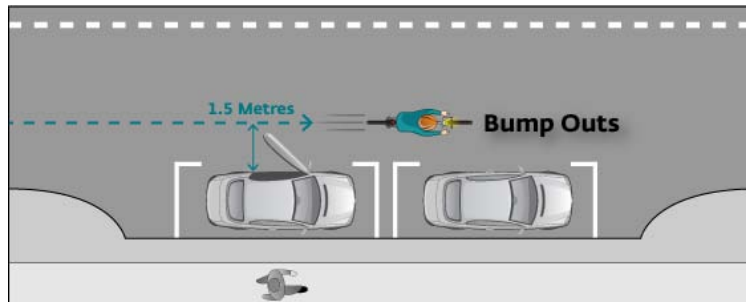
Raised walkways or intersections are usually combined with other traffic calming measures to allow motorists to travel along a roadway at a reduced speed. They also enhance the area for pedestrians, particularly those who are mobility impaired.

These raised areas require motorists to reduce their speed. However, cyclists can easily navigate them without any reduction in speed. **You should not pass motorists that have slowed for these raised areas.**

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Bump Outs

Bump outs not only slow overall traffic speeds, they also help reduce the length of crosswalks and make pedestrians more visible to motorists. Always remember that you are still on a two-way street with motorists and ride accordingly. Additionally, you should not ride into the parking area between the bump outs or between parked cars. Although *The Highway Traffic Act* does not specify the distance cyclists should keep from parked cars, cycling advocacy groups recommend that you **maintain a straight line and approximately 1.5 meters of clearance of any parked cars** to avoid being hit by an opening door.



The Can-Bike Program

The Can-Bike program provides a nationally standardized approach to cycling safety and is oriented to both recreational and commuter cyclists.

The foundation of Can-Bike is built upon the belief that cyclists are safest when they act and are treated as traffic on the roadway. Cyclists have the same rights as drivers but also have the same responsibilities and must follow the same rules.

The key areas of Can-Bike are:

- Understanding traffic dynamics
- Developing cycling skills and knowledge which improve:
 - Maneuverability
 - Visibility
 - Predictability
 - Communication

[Cycling skills](#) are an important part of being safe on the roadway. Once learned, cyclists should practice these skills to improve abilities on a bicycle. Additionally, all cyclists can benefit from a cycling skills course taught by a qualified CAN-BIKE instructor.

The cycling information presented here has been reviewed by certified Can-Bike instructors. These instructors are nationally certified and highly skilled cyclists. If you are interested in learning more about Can-Bike, [email](#) the Manitoba Cycling Association (link) or phone (204) 925-5686.

What to do if you're in a collision

1. Attend to any immediate injuries or concerns.
2. When safe, move out of the way of other traffic.
3. Exchange particulars:
 - Cyclists: provide name, phone number, address and type of bike.
 - Motorists: provide name, licence number, policy number, phone number, address, vehicle type, plate number and vehicle owner.
4. Document the details of the accident (e.g., where, when and how it happened, plus any damages and injuries).
5. Gather names and phone numbers of any witnesses.

You can download an accident report form [from our website](#). It will help you know what details to obtain from the scene:

Since bicycles are not insured through Manitoba Public Insurance, cyclists who are found responsible for a collision could be held liable for damages caused to a motor vehicle. Under such a scenario, you would also be responsible for any damages to your own bicycle.

Bodily injury claims for those involved in collisions with a motor vehicle are covered through the Personal Injury Protection Plan.

To open a claim or for any other claim inquires, contact the Manitoba Public Insurance **Call Centre**:

In Winnipeg
Call 985-7000

Outside Winnipeg (Toll-Free)
Call 1-800-665-2410

Deaf Access TTY/TDD
Call 985-8832

Bike Safe

Helpful links

[Bike to the Future](#)

Bike to the Future is a non-profit organization working to make cycling in Winnipeg a safe, enjoyable, accessible and convenient transportation choice year-round.

[Manitoba Cycling Association](#)

Manitoba Cycling Association is a non-profit organization involved in the development of cycling programs throughout the province. Here you can find information on upcoming events, bike shops and cycling clubs.

[City of Winnipeg](#)

Learn more about the city's active transportation plan and upcoming bicycle infrastructure. Also available is a downloadable copy of the Winnipeg cycling map and list of bicycle repair and rental shops.

[Manitoba Health and Healthy Living](#)

Learn about healthy living and cycling safety. Included are links to trails in Manitoba and information about the low cost helmet program.

[Canadian Cycling Association](#)

A National Sport Organization, the Canadian Cycling Association promotes cycling in Canada. This website includes information on Can Bike.

[Brain Injury Association of Manitoba](#)

Working to prevent and reduce brain injuries, this site provides information on the effects of a brain injury and the importance of always wearing a helmet.

[Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute](#)

The Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute is a non-profit program providing bicycle helmet information from the Washington area. Here you can find information on helmet types, standards and fit.

Bicycle Shops in Manitoba

Bicycle shops can help you find the right bicycle for your type of riding as well as provide important service and repair for your bike. They may also be able to provide information on additional resources such as local cycling organizations or clubs.

Below is a list of some bicycle shops throughout the province. To add any additional shops to the list, please contact Manitoba Public Insurance through [our website](#) (simply click on Contact Us on the top menu line to send us the information).

Winnipeg Shops (link all)

- [Alter Ego Sports](#)
- [Bee-2-Gether](#)
- [Bikes and Beyond](#)
- [Corydon Cycle & Sports](#)
- [Gooch's Bicycle and Hobby Shop](#)
- [Gord's Cycle & Ski](#)
- Kings Skate Snow and Surf
- [Lifesport Shops Ltd.](#)
- [Mountain Equipment Co-op](#)
- [Natural Cycle](#)
- [Olympia Cycle and Ski](#)
- Portage Cycle & Sports
- Royal Sports
- Sampson's Sporting Life
- Spartan Sports
- [Woodcock Cycle Works](#)

Rural Manitoba Shops

- Pringle's Sports Excellence
Boissevain
- [A&L Get Active](#)
Brandon
- [Stream & Wood](#)
Brandon
- [Black's Cycle & Sporting Goods Ltd.](#)
Dauphin
- Olympic Sports Shop
Morden
- Mike's Bicycle Shop
Portage la Prairie
- Keystone Sporting Goods Ltd.
Selkirk

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- [Body Driven Sports](#)
Steinbach
- Atkinson Sports Excellence Ltd.
Swan River
- L&M Sports Excellence
The Pas
- Doug's Sports & Ski Shop
Thompson
- [Time Out Sports Excellence](#)
Winkler

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I choose the right helmet?

The helmet should be approved by a recognized safety standards organization such as the CSA, Snell, ASTM or ANSI.

A cycling helmet should fit snugly on your head, even with the chin strap undone. Most helmet manufacturers provide a variety of foam pads that can be adjusted to fit a range of head sizes. Once fitted, you should be able to move your head from side to side or back and forth without the helmet tipping off.

To ensure you're visible to motorists, choose a helmet that is bright in colour. The helmet should also provide adequate ventilation to keep you comfortable, even in warmer temperatures.

[Click here](#) to learn how to fit your helmet correctly.

2. How do I know if my helmet needs replacement?

If your helmet is damaged or its shell has deteriorated, it should be replaced. Helmet standards and quality change over time and many older helmets simply do not meet current requirements.

Helmet manufacturers recommend that you replace your helmet every five years. However, this is highly dependent on usage and care.

For additional signs that your helmet needs to be replaced [click here](#).

3. How do I choose what type of bicycle I should ride?

A bicycle that is too large for the rider can be difficult to control and maneuver. Before you ride, there are a few things you should check to make sure your bicycle is the right fit for you.

To learn more, [click here](#).

4. How can I be visible when riding at night?

Wearing bright colours such as yellow or orange, will help you stand out well at night. Reflective material on your clothing, backpack or side saddle bags will also help others to see you.

You are required by law to have a white light at the front of your bicycle and a red or amber reflector at the rear of your bike.

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Pedal or ankle reflectors, white reflective strips on your front fork and red reflective tape on your chain stays can also help to make you more visible. Additionally, reflective bands on your wrists make hand signals more visible.

[Click here](#) for more information.

5. What do I need to do before I ride to make sure my bicycle is in good working order?

The ABC Quick Check is an easy and effective way to ensure that your bicycle is in working order.

The short version of the ABC Quick Check is performed somewhat in reverse and takes less than a minute to do:

- **Check** - Pick your bike up about 10 cm (three to four inches) off the ground and drop it. Did anything rattle or fall off?
- **Quick** - ***If you have quick releases on your wheels and seat, make sure they are tight and are not easy to open.***
- **C** - Check the chain to ensure that it is well lubricated.
- **B** - Pull both brake levers and make sure that they do not pull all the way back to the handlebars. With both brakes engaged, rock your bike back and forth checking for any play in the steering.
- **A** - Check that both tires are fully inflated.

[Click here](#) for the full version and for more information.

6. Can I ride my bicycle on the sidewalk?

It is against the law to ride on sidewalks unless the diameter of your rear wheel is 410 millimetres (16 inches) or less.

7. Where can I ride my bicycle on the road?

The Highway Traffic Act does not define “as close as practicable” or specify the distance cyclists should keep from parked cars, so you must use good judgment in determining the best position to ride based on the conditions that exist. Experienced cyclists recommend you maintain at least one meter clearance from the curb or edge of the road and a 1.5 meter clearance from parked cars to avoid the door zone.

Under some conditions, you may have to ride further away from the edge of the road or curb. For more information, see the [Traffic Skills section](#).

8. How do I use the city's new cycling infrastructure?

In recent years, awareness of active transportation and the demand for better cycling facilities has seen the development of several new types infrastructure.

Understanding how to use and share these new facilities, particularly road infrastructure, is vital to ensuring the safety of road users.

Click on the links below to find out more about the different types of infrastructure:

[Diamond lanes](#)

[Bike lanes](#)

[Sharrows](#)

[Multi-use paths](#)

[Bike boulevards](#)

[Traffic circles](#)

[Bump outs](#)

9. What are the correct hand signals to use when riding my bicycle?

Communication through appropriate hand signals is one of the key factors in cycling safely. When motorists, other cyclists and pedestrians know what you are intending to do, it is safer for everyone.

[Click here](#) to view the different hand signals.

10. Where can I find information on *The Highway Traffic Act* as it relates to bicycles?

The Highway Traffic Act (HTA) has valuable information for both cyclists and motorists regarding the rules of the road.

[Click here](#) to see the sections of the HTA that apply to cyclists.

11. I want to ride my bicycle year-round. How can I be prepared for changing weather conditions?

Weather conditions can create hazards for cyclists, so knowing what to do and how to prepare will make it easier to cycle year-round.

[Click here](#) to find out what steps you can take to ensure you're ready for all conditions.

12. What is the proper way to make lane changes when riding on the road?

Always shoulder check well in advance to determine the best opportunity to change lanes. You may have to shoulder check several times before signalling and changing lanes.

When traffic conditions permit, you can make multiple lane changes in one smooth transition. If necessary, slow down and wait for traffic to clear before proceeding.

13. How many cycling collision injuries are there per year?

In Canada, approximately 7,500 cyclists suffer serious injuries each year and another 70,000 are treated in hospital emergency rooms for cycling-related injuries.

In Manitoba, there were 12 fatalities and 818 injuries resulting from bicycle and motor vehicle collisions from 2005 to 2009.

For more cycling related statistics, please see: [Cycling injuries – the facts](#).

14. What are the most common causes for collisions between cyclists and motorists?

There are many causes for bicycle/motor vehicle collisions but the most common are not following the rules of the road, failing to yield the right of way, not seeing the cyclist and squeezing cyclists to edge of the road.

Additional Resources

Youth Materials

“I Cycle Safely” Presentation

This presentation is an excellent tool to promote cycling safety to young children and works well with the [“I Cycle Safely”](#) brochure. It is an excellent tool for teachers, daycares and community groups to use with their children. The entire presentation, along with a guide and lecture notes, is available by [request](#).



“I Cycle Safely” Brochure

This brochure is intended for distribution to children ages 3 to 9 and covers basic information on bike maintenance, riding skills and rules of the road. Copies are available by request. Please be sure to include a mailing or delivery address in your [request](#).



Young Adult / Adult

“Bike Safe” Presentation

This presentation contains basic cycling information intended for a more mature audience and deals with topics such as moving through higher traffic roadways, destination positioning and infrastructure cyclists should be aware of. It is an excellent tool for high school physical education teachers, community groups and businesses promoting healthy living and/or a greener environment. The complete presentation, along with the guide and lecture notes, is available upon [request](#).



“Cycle Safely” Booklet

This booklet draws out highlights from our comprehensive web content and makes an excellent take away if showing the “Bike Safe” presentation. It targets mature cyclists and provides information on basic cycling skills, roadway skills and infrastructure information. It is available to [download](#) or order for wider distribution.



Bike Safe

Additional information

Please contact:

Road Safety Programming

Manitoba Public Insurance

510-234 Donald Street, Box 6300

Winnipeg, MB R3C 4A4

Phone: 985-7199

Toll free: 1-888-767-7640

Fax (204) 954-5317