

May Is National Bike Month

Bicycle Laws and Safety Tips for Motorists

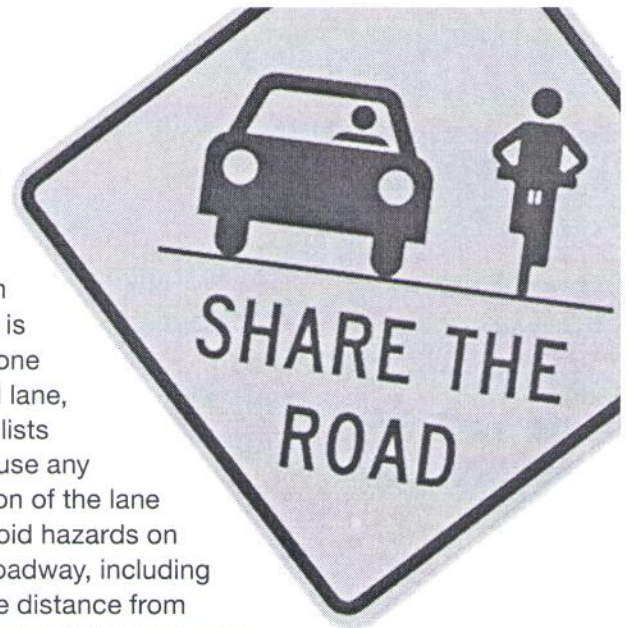
Most motor vehicle drivers know the rules of the road when it comes to other cars – but what are you supposed to do when you come across a person on a bicycle? If you're not sure what to do, it can be a frustrating encounter – “is that bicycle allowed to be there, can I go around, how do I go around...?!” Bicyclists are vehicle operators, and are legally permitted to be in the roadway – but they also must follow traffic rules. Bicyclists fare best when they act and are treated like drivers of vehicles. However, it is important to remember that people on bicycles are vulnerable road users – they don't have a metal shell to protect them – so motor vehicle drivers should be extra cautious around bicyclists. Follow these basic tips from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation when you come across a person on a bicycle! (See the full PA Vehicle Code for details).

Bicycle Laws

1. Before passing, you must first assess if you can maneuver around the bicyclist. Be sure to check for oncoming traffic. Important! When passing, you must allow **at least four feet** between your vehicle and a bicycle for the vehicle to safely pass

the bicycle. When safe to do so, it is legal to cross the center double yellow line if necessary to provide the required four feet when passing a bicycle.

2. Unless making a left turn, bicyclists traveling at less than normal speed must keep to the right side of the roadway when there is more than one lane marked for travel in that direction, and must travel in the same direction as the rest of traffic. Bicyclists may keep to the left on ONE WAY roadways.



3. When there is only one travel lane, bicyclists may use any portion of the lane to avoid hazards on the roadway, including a safe distance from stopped and parked cars.
4. No turn by the driver of a motor vehicle shall interfere with a bicyclist proceeding straight on a roadway or shoulder.
5. It is illegal to force a bicyclist off of the road. If you do this, you may face criminal charges.
6. While bicyclists are vehicle operators and are expected to obey all traffic laws, they may travel at less than the posted minimum speed and may not be cited for impeding traffic. Bicyclists may operate on a shoulder or berm, but are not required to do so.

Safety Tips for Motorists

1. When approaching or passing a bicycle, slow down to a safe and prudent speed.
2. After you have passed a bicyclist, do not slow down or stop quickly. Vehicle brakes are more powerful than a bicycle's, and you could be responsible for causing a crash.
3. Do not sound your horn close to bicyclists, unless you must do so to avoid a crash.

