

Safe Driving Near Bicycle Lanes



California's varied landscapes and climate make it a prime location for cycling, whether for commuting, fitness, or recreation. However, each year, more than 100 cyclists are killed and over 10,000 are injured in collisions, often due to the behavior, lack of skill, or inattention of either cyclists or motorists.

Keep a Safe Passing Distance

When overtaking a cyclist, [California law](#) mandates that drivers maintain at least **three feet** of distance between their vehicle and the cyclist. This space acts as a safety buffer, protecting cyclists from potential contact with your vehicle or the slipstream that can destabilize their ride. If the road is too narrow to pass safely, wait until there is enough room to do so.

Check Mirrors and Blind Spots

Before changing lanes or making turns, especially when passing a cyclist, thoroughly check your mirrors and blind spots. Cyclists can be harder to spot than cars, especially in low light or in urban areas where buildings and parked vehicles may obstruct your view.

Exercise Extra Caution in Urban Areas

Urban streets with designated bike lanes are often high-traffic areas for cyclists. Drivers should be particularly cautious in these locations, keeping an eye out for cyclists entering and exiting the bike lane.

Respect the Bike Lane

Do not drive, stop, or park in a marked bike lane. In California, drivers may enter the bike lane within 200 feet of an intersection when making a right turn, where the solid white line turns into a dashed line. Always ensure there are no cyclists in the lane before merging into it.

Be Mindful of Children on Bikes

Children on bicycles can be unpredictable due to their developing motor skills and decision-making abilities. Exercise extra caution in areas where they're more likely to be, such as near schools and in residential neighborhoods, and take care when backing out of driveways.

Lay off the Horn

Honking can startle bicyclists and make them swerve off the road or into traffic.

Look Before Opening Your Door

"Dooring" accidents, where a driver opens their car door into the path of a cyclist, are a significant danger, especially on busy streets. Always check for oncoming cyclists and pedestrians before opening your door. This simple habit can prevent serious injuries.

Yield to Cyclists When Necessary

Cyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists and should be treated with equal respect on the road. This includes yielding to cyclists when required, such as at intersections, crosswalks, or when turning across bike lanes.

Be Patient

Patience is crucial when sharing the road with cyclists. Remember that cyclists are vulnerable, and what might seem like a minor inconvenience for a driver can be life-threatening for a cyclist. Exercise patience, even if it means slowing down or waiting a few extra seconds to pass safely.