

Driving Safely around Bicycles



Bicycles are a growing part of the transportation network, and drivers play a key role in keeping cyclists safe. Whether operating a work vehicle or driving your personal car, understanding how to safely share the road with bicycles is essential to preventing collisions and protecting all road users.

Why it Matters

Cyclists are more vulnerable than drivers. They lack the protection of a vehicle and are harder to see. A moment of inattention or misjudgment can lead to serious injury or worse. Safe driving helps:

- Prevent crashes and injuries
- Improve traffic flow and cooperation
- Support community safety and mobility
- Comply with traffic laws and right-of-way rules

Common Risks to Cyclists

Understanding the most frequent causes of vehicle-bicycle incidents can help drivers anticipate and avoid dangerous situations. These risks often occur in everyday driving environments and require extra attention.

- Passing too closely
- Turning across a cyclist's path
- Opening vehicle doors into bike lanes
- Failing to yield at intersections or driveways
- Distracted or aggressive driving

Key Safety Practices

1. Give Space

- Leave at least **3 feet** of clearance when passing a bicycle (more at higher speeds).
- Never squeeze past a cyclist in a narrow lane. Wait until it's safe to pass.

2. Check Before Turning

- Always check mirrors and blind spots for cyclists before turning or changing lanes.
- Yield to cyclists going straight when turning right.

3. Watch for Bike Lanes

- Do not drive, park, or stop in designated bike lanes.
- Cross bike lanes only when turning or entering/exiting a driveway, and yield to cyclists.

4. Open Doors with Caution

- Use the **"Dutch Reach"** - open your door with your far hand to naturally check for cyclists.

5. Be Patient and Predictable

- Avoid honking or revving the engine near cyclists.
- Signal turns and lane changes well in advance.
- Reduce speed in areas with high bicycle traffic.

Special Considerations

Certain environments and conditions require extra caution when driving near bicycles.

- **In low visibility** (dawn, dusk, rain), be extra alert for cyclists.
- **In work zones**, ensure cones or signs don't block bike lanes.
- **In school zones or parks**, expect children on bikes who may not follow traffic rules.

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