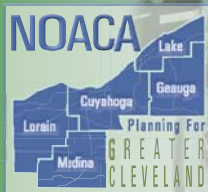




BASIC BICYCLE SAFETY

Bicycle Safety Tips & Laws for Ohio





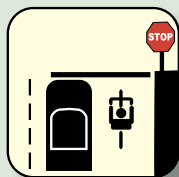
✓ RIDE IN MIDDLE OF LANE IN SLOW TRAFFIC

Get in the middle of the lane at busy intersections and whenever you are moving at the same speed as traffic.



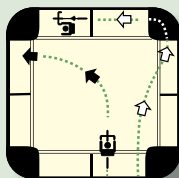
✓ FOLLOW LANE MARKINGS

Don't turn left from the right lane. Don't go straight in a lane marked "right-turn only".



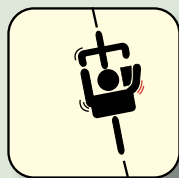
✓ OBEY TRAFFIC SIGNS AND SIGNALS

Bicycles must drive like other vehicles if they are to be taken seriously by motorists.



✓ CHOOSE THE BEST WAY TO TURN LEFT

There are two ways to make a left turn. (1) Like an auto: signal, move into the left turn lane and turn left. (2) Like a pedestrian: ride straight to the far-side crosswalk. Walk your bike across.



✓ KEEP BOTH HANDS READY TO BREAK

You may not stop in time if you brake one-handed. Allow extra distance for stopping in the rain, since brakes are less efficient when wet.



✓ HAND SIGNALS

Hand signals tell motorists and pedestrians what you intend to do. Signal as a matter of law, of courtesy, and of self-protection.



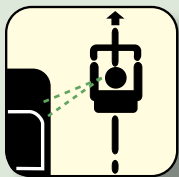
✓ KEEP BIKE IN GOOD REPAIR

Adjust your bike to fit you and keep it working properly. Check brakes and tires regularly. Routine maintenance is simple and you can learn to do it yourself.



✓ USE LIGHTS AT NIGHT

The law requires a white headlight (visible from at least 500 feet ahead) and a red rear reflector or taillight (visible up to 300 feet from behind).



✓ SCAN THE ROAD BEHIND

Learn to look back over your shoulder without losing your balance or swerving. Some riders use rearview mirrors.



✓ AVOID ROAD HAZARDS

Watch out for parallel sewer grates, gravel or debris. Cross railroad tracks at right angles.



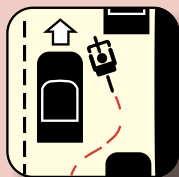
✓ DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Avoid loose fitting clothing. Wear light, visible colors. In inclement weather dress in layers. And always wear a helmet, preferably white for greater visibility.



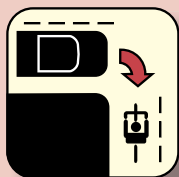
⊘ DON'T PASS ON THE RIGHT

Motorists may not look for or see a bicycle passing on the right. Learn to scan the road behind you while riding. Look back over your shoulder without swerving to the left, or use a rearview mirror.



⊘ DON'T WEAVE BETWEEN PARKED CARS

Weaving between parked cars makes it difficult for motorists to be aware of you on the road.



⊘ NEVER RIDE AGAINST TRAFFIC

Motorists aren't looking for bicyclists riding on the wrong side of the road.



⊘ NEVER RIDE WITH HEADPHONES & ✓ ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET

Never wear headphones while riding a bike. Always wear a helmet.

Bicycle Laws

A significant number of Ohio's traffic laws apply to bicyclists as well as to motorists. In addition to these laws, bicyclists are required to adhere to some special rules. The following statutes are paraphrased. For the official version refer to the Ohio Revised Code. The portions that are underlined are changes that became effective September 15, 2006.

4511.01 DEFINITIONS

Vehicle: Every device used for the purpose of transportation on a highway. Exceptions are motorized wheelchairs, devices powered by overhead electrical wires, or which move on stationary rails, or are powered by humans (other than a bicycle). A bicycle is a vehicle.

Bicycle: Every device propelled solely by human power and having either two tandem wheels, or one wheel in the front and two wheels in the rear, or any two wheels in front and one wheel in the rear, any of which measures more than 14 inches in diameter. This excludes tricycles designed as a play vehicle for children.

Driver/Operator: Every person who is in physical control of a vehicle, including a bicycle.

4511.051 Prohibitions on Use of Freeways

No person shall operate a bicycle within the boundary lines of a freeway except where there exists a facility that is separate from the roadway and shoulders designed and appropriately marked for bicycle use.

4511.07 Local Traffic Regulations

Local authorities may regulate the operation of bicycles and require registration and licensing, **but only for residents of the local authority.**

They may not prohibit the use of bikes on public streets, except on freeways with special facilities.

4511.12 Obeying Traffic Control Devices

Drivers of bicycles are obligated to obey all traffic control devices, including: flag persons, signs, pavement markings, and signal lights.

4511.13 Signal Lights

The red, green and yellow signal lights apply to all vehicles including bicycles.



4511.25 Lanes of Travel
 A vehicle/bicycle that is proceeding at less than the prevailing and lawful speed must be driven on the right side of the roadway far enough to the right to allow passing by faster vehicles, if safe and reasonable, except when:

- 1) passing another vehicle going in the same direction,
- 2) making a left turn,
- 3) when an obstruction exists,
- 4) when driving on a roadway divided into three or more marked lanes for traffic, or
- 5) when driving on a roadway for one-way traffic.
 (See 4511.55)

4511.36 Turning at an Intersection

Right turn: make right turns as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway. Left turn: driver must be as close to the right of the center line as is practicable before turning left. After passing through the intersection the vehicle shall commence travel in the lane closest to the right of the center line. When traveling on a one-way street a left turn must always be made in the extreme left-hand lane available.

4511.39 Turning and Stop Signals

A bicyclist must indicate his or her intention to turn, or move

left or right, by signaling at least **one time** one hundred feet prior to a turn. **The bicyclist is not required to signal in a designated turn lane or if hands are needed for the safe operation of the vehicle.**

4511.40 Hand and Arm Signals

When using hand and arm signals always do so in the following manner:

Left turn - left hand and arm extended horizontally.

Right turn - left hand and arm extended upward or by extending the right hand and arm horizontally and to the right side of the bicycle (effective September 9, 1996).

4511.441 Pedestrian Right of Way

The driver of a bicycle must yield the right of way to any pedestrian on a sidewalk.

4511.53 Rules for Bicycles

A person operating a bicycle shall ride **upon or astride** a permanent seat and carry no more persons than the number for which it is designed and equipped. No person operating a bicycle shall carry any item which would prevent them from having at least one hand on the handle bars. **The carrying of a child in a seat or trailer designed for this and firmly attached to the cycle is not prohibited.**

4511.55 Riding Bicycles

Every person operating a bicycle on a roadway shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable, **except when it is unreasonable or unsafe to do so**, obeying all traffic rules applicable to vehicles, and exercising due care when passing a standing vehicle or one proceeding in the same direction. Persons riding bicycles on a roadway shall not ride more than two abreast in a single lane, except on paths or parts of roadways set aside for that purpose.

4511.56 Signal Devices on Bicycles

Every bicycle must be equipped with a bell or some device, other than a siren or whistle, which would be audible at a distance of at least 100 feet distance. Every bicycle must be equipped with an adequate brake when used on a street or highway. Every bicycle when in use one-half hour before sunrise or one-half hour before sunset shall be equipped with the following:

- a lamp, **mounted on the front of the bicycle or on the operator**, with a white light visible at a distance of at least 500 feet **to the front and 300 feet to the sides**.
- Rear red reflector visible from all distances from 100 feet to 600 feet to the

rear when directly in front of lawful lower beams of headlamps on a motor vehicle.

- Rear red light visible from at least 500 hundred feet, **steady or flashing, which can also act as a reflector if it meets the above requirements**.
- Colorless front reflector.
- Tire sidewalls must be retro-reflective or colorless, or amber reflectors may be mounted on the front wheel spokes and colorless or red reflectors mounted on rear wheel spokes. They must be visible at a distance of 600 feet from a motorist's headlamps.

4511.711 Driving on a Sidewalk

Bicycles are allowed on sidewalks (subject to local laws; see 4511.07). **However, local authorities are not permitted to require bicycles to be operating on sidewalks.**

Editor's note: Riding a bicycle on a sidewalk is potentially dangerous and is not recommended.

4513.31 Properly Secured Loads

No vehicle shall be driven on any highway unless such vehicle is loaded to prevent any of its load from shifting, dropping, leaking or otherwise escaping there from.

SAFETY TIPS

- **Bicyclists are not allowed** on Interstate and limited access highways in Ohio.
- **Use lights** when riding in the rain and at night.
- **Ride single file** when riding in a group.
- **When riding in a narrow lane**, stay far enough from the right edge to discourage vehicles from passing dangerously close in the same lane.
- **When riding past parked cars**, be alert for motorists opening doors or pulling out from parking spaces. Stay outside the door zone.
- **Allow extra braking distance** in wet weather. Bicycle brakes function poorly when wet!
- **Cross railroad tracks** at a right angle and be especially cautious when tracks are wet or frosted as they are then very slippery.
- **Cross bridges with** iron gratings very carefully, especially when wet.
- **Fasten all** spare clothing, parcels or equipment securely to rack or bicycle to prevent anything from falling into a wheel.
- **Lock your bike** when left unattended.
- **Keep tires inflated** to proper pressure and bicycle in good repair.
- **Ride defensively at all times.** Never assume motorists know your intentions - make them clear by signals and your position in the lane.
- **Wear** highly visible clothing.
- **Yield** to pedestrians and emergency vehicles.
- **Be predictable** - do not surprise a motorist or pedestrian.
- **Beware of sand or gravel** on the road when making turns - a bicycle can easily slide out from under you on sand or gravel.
- **Many motorists are unaware** that bicyclists are legitimate users of the streets and highways, so ride courteously, exercise common sense and obey all traffic signs, signals and rules of the road.
- **Occasionally a bicyclist will have no choice** but to ride on a road or street judged unsuitable for bicyclists in order to access a suitable road/street. Use considerable caution when riding such roads or streets, walking your bicycle if necessary.

About NOACA

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is a public organization serving the counties of and municipalities and townships within Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina. NOACA is designated to serve as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), with responsibility for comprehensive planning for highways, public transit, airports, waterways and bikeways, public transit, airports, waterways and bikeways, as defined in the current transportation law. NOACA also performs water quality, transportation-related air quality, and other environmental planning functions. The NOACA Governing Board is composed of 38 local public officials and convenes monthly to provide a forum for members to present, discuss and develop solutions to local and areawide issues and problems regarding transportation and the environment.



For more information about NOACA and its bike planning activities, check out the NOACA website at www.noaca.org/bicycleplanning.html.



BICYCLE AS TRANSPORTATION

