

Nova Scotia **Bicycle Safety**



Bicycle Safety

The Cyclist - According to the *Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act* cyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists. When cyclists and motorists follow the same set of rules, the chance of a collision is greatly reduced.

Cycling Strategies: Be Visible, Be Predictable



Where To Ride on the Road -

Ride on the right side of the road with the flow of traffic. Use as much of the lane as required to be safe from roadside hazards.

Signals - Cyclists should use these hand signals to indicate a turn or a stop. Although not shown in the *Drivers' Handbook*, an alternative right hand signal is widely recognized.



Left turn signal



Right turn signal



Alternative right
turn signal



Slowing/stopping
signal





Ride a Straight Course -

Don't weave between parked cars. Otherwise, a motorist may lose sight of you and there could be a collision if you suddenly pop out in traffic again. Stay at least one metre from parked cars to avoid opening doors.

Look Behind You - Learn to quickly scan the traffic behind you without swerving. A rear view mirror helps to view traffic, however a lane change requires a look behind, which also signals your intention to motorists.



Be Careful at Intersections -

Intersections can be dangerous for cyclists. At a four-way stop, it is important for cyclists to remain in line with the flow of traffic and to wait their turn. Right-turn lanes are for traffic that is making a turn; don't go into a turn lane if you are going to travel straight ahead.



Bicycle Safety



Vehicular Left

Turn - Signal and look behind you. When there's an opening, move into the left lane and turn from near the centre line.



Pedestrian Left

Turn - When traffic is heavy and it feels unsafe to change into the left lane, ride straight through the intersection, stop at the corner and walk your bike across the intersection.



Safety Equipment

Lights - When riding at night, you must use a white front light and red rear reflector (a rear-facing flashing red light, like an LED, is okay too). Reflectors and reflective tape on your helmet, clothes or bicycle also make you more visible.



Horn - Attach a horn or bell to your handle bars and use it to warn pedestrians and other vehicles that you are near them.

Helmet Safety - By law, you must use a bicycle helmet when operating a bicycle. A properly fitted helmet greatly reduces the risk of brain injuries, the leading type of fatal and disabling injury to bicyclists.

How to Properly Wear a Helmet - Read the manufacturer's instructions and consult with sales staff when you buy a helmet; staff will make sure that you get a helmet that fits you correctly. Generally speaking, wear the helmet low on your forehead - about a two finger width above your eyebrows.

With the helmet on your head, try to move it gently from side to side and back and forth. It should be snug enough to move the skin. If not, use the thicker foam padding provided with the helmet. Tighten the chinstraps with enough room to slide one finger between the strap and the chin.



Sharing the Road with Bicycles

The Motorist - According to the Nova Scotia *Motor Vehicle Act*, bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists. Respect for the rights of all road users goes a long way towards avoiding collisions.

You Can Prevent Crashes



Watch For Bicyclists - Most collisions involving bicyclists and motorists occur at intersections. This often happens when a motorist pulls out from a stop sign or driveway without yielding, or turns across a bicyclist's path.

Make Room For Cyclists - Bicyclists need to ride at least 1 metre away from parked cars to avoid being hit if a door suddenly opens. Bicyclists also need to avoid potholes and debris, and to pass double-parked cars. Bicyclists may occupy as much of a traffic lane as their safety warrants.

Signals - Cyclists use these hand signals to indicate changes in their speed or direction. Although not shown in the *Drivers' Handbook*, an alternative right hand signal is widely recognized.



Left turn
signal



Right turn
signal



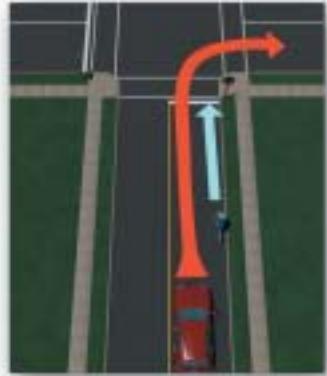
Alternative
right turn
signal



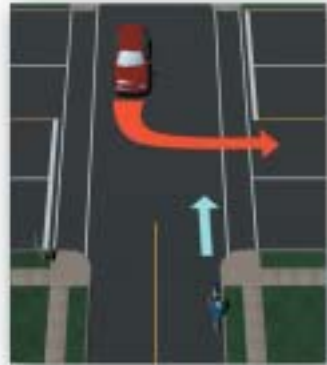
Slowing/
stopping
signal

Common Car-Bike Collisions

“Right Hook” - Many motorists misjudge the speed of bicycles; they can travel faster than you think! (Experienced cyclists can travel at 25-35 km/h on a flat surface and up to 50km/h going downhill.) This misjudgment causes the motorist to pass and turn directly in front of the bicyclist. Scan the side of the road for bicyclists, and if it is not safe to pass before turning, slow down and move behind the cyclist before making the turn. **DO NOT** pass and cut!



“Left Cross” - Motorists making turns which cross oncoming traffic must watch for cyclists as well as motor vehicles. Too often, motorists misjudge the speed of an oncoming bicyclist and turn in front of them. Motorists should always stop and wait for oncoming traffic, including bicycles, to pass before turning.



Getting Doored - When exiting your car, look behind you for approaching bicyclists. Don't open your door unless it's safe to do so.

Please keep in mind that bicycles are much more vulnerable in a collision. Motorists must realize that they are operating a large vehicle and with that comes the responsibility to ensure that it is safely operated.





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