



Institute of Advanced Motorists

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Fact Sheet 17/001

SHARING THE ROAD WITH CYCLISTS

Cyclists all travel at different speeds and have different levels of road experience. As a driver, you will need to take care to judge their speed as well as the road and weather conditions from the cyclist's point of view. Remember too that some cyclists, particularly younger ones, have never driven a car, and so don't recognise the problems that they can cause car drivers. In an accident involving a car and a cyclist, whoever is to blame the cyclist will always be the more vulnerable to a serious injury. The following tips for motorists have been prepared with the National Cycling Strategy Board to avoid adding to the 2,500 cyclists killed or seriously injured each year.

Cyclists don't have steel armour round them like we do. Passing them at speed within a foot of their elbow may feel perfectly safe from where you are, but it is very disconcerting when you are the cyclist.

Sounding your horn when you are close will startle them, maybe into swerving in front of you. They will usually be aware of you already! Slow down around cyclists and drive smoothly. Keep within the speed limit.

In traffic, make sure that you don't cut up a cyclist who is about to pass you on the near side. Don't try to cut across a cyclist when you need to turn left at a junction. Wait behind the cyclist until the cyclist has either turned left or passed the junction.

Park with care and prevent any passengers from opening a door until you are sure that there is no cyclist coming up on either side. Likewise, check over your shoulder to see there's no cyclist approaching before opening the driver's door

Cyclists are advised to take a prominent position in the road well ahead of any manoeuvre to ensure they are in the right place at the right time. If they ride in the middle of the road it is probably not to obstruct your path, but to ensure that they are seen by you and by other motorists. Cyclists often ride at some distance from the kerb to avoid drains and potholes and to discourage motorists from squeezing them on narrow roads. It is not in their interest to delay motorists deliberately. Remember too that their ability to signal is limited compared to ours, so try to anticipate what they might do from the position they have taken on the road. Please be patient.

Advanced stop lines are for cyclists alone and should be respected, so leave the space between the two sets of stop lines empty, whether or not cyclists are occupying it when you arrive. Be aware of where cycle lanes terminate, because this often means road space is more scarce and that in turn can make a cyclist more vulnerable.

Give young riders even more space than older ones; both old and young riders may swerve suddenly to avoid debris or potholes, but young people are more prone to forget your presence when they do.

Remember to use all your mirrors with extra care before changing direction when there are cyclists

about. There might be a cyclist in your blind spot. Pay particular attention on roundabouts, as many accidents to cyclists happen at these junctions. Always signal at roundabouts.

Finally, every motorist has seen some irresponsible cyclists use the pavement, road and zebra crossings, seemingly at random. This is not only dangerous for pedestrians but unlawful, and the police can and do issue penalty notices for such offences. The police take a serious view of such careless or dangerous cycling, particularly when it puts other road users at risk. Responsible motorists give such irresponsible cyclists a wide berth.

For information on any other aspect of driving or riding please contact the IAM on 020 8996 9600 or visit iam.org.uk.