



# Sharing the Road Together: Drivers and Cyclists



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# Sharing the Road: Drivers and cyclists

Cycling is a fantastic way to get and stay fit. Regular cycling can also help you lose weight and reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. People who cycle regularly in mid adulthood typically have a fitness level of someone 10 years younger, and a life expectancy two years above average.

Yet, over half the people questioned in a survey\* said that they don't cycle, with the main reasons being 'concerns around the safety of road cycling' and 'concerns about drivers treating them badly'.

This advice sheet aims to provide simple safety tips for both drivers and cyclists on how we can share our roads together and avoid conflicts caused by not understanding one another's needs and actions.

## Sharing the Road

Sometimes our own actions, or the actions of others around us, can put us in danger, or make driving and riding unpleasant and stressful. For example, drivers who overtake cyclists too closely cause intimidation and upset, often unintentionally.

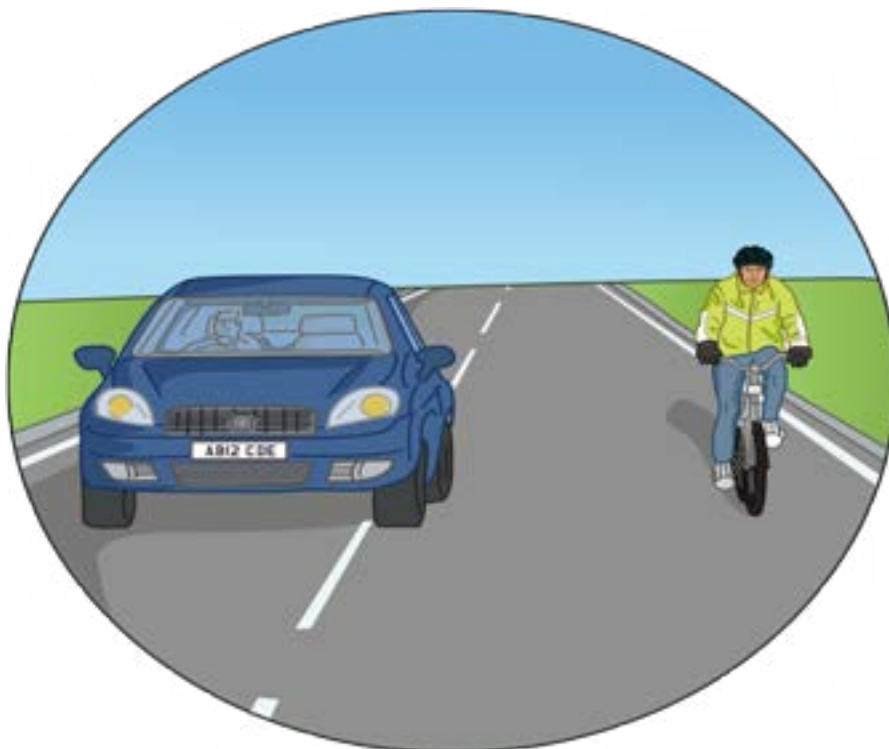
Equally, cyclists can place themselves in danger (deliberately or inadvertently) by their actions, such as riding off the pavement into the road, which contributes to about a fifth of serious injuries to cyclists, and is extremely annoying for drivers.

## Drivers

It's easy to forget (especially if you don't cycle) that a cyclist does not have the same protection which you have in a vehicle and that even relatively minor contact can seriously injure them.

## Cyclists

It's easy to forget that drivers sometimes find it difficult to see cyclists, especially in the dark, or to predict what they are about to do, and that they may not understand why you adopt the 'primary position' on the road, which involves cycling well away from the kerb.



\* YouGov Survey, commissioned by RoSPA, March 2015

# Sharing the Road Together

## Cyclists would like drivers to know:

- They feel threatened by inconsiderate driving
- They need to keep away from the gutter to avoid pot holes and debris
- They feel exposed when turning right
- They feel very threatened by close overtaking
- They are not deliberately trying to get in your way and slow you down
- When they are riding in the middle of their lane, this is so they can see and be seen better, and often because there isn't room for drivers to overtake them safely
- Large vehicles pose a very high risk to them, especially when the vehicles turns left at junctions

## Drivers would like cyclists to know:

- They find it very difficult to see cyclists who don't use lights at night
- They get annoyed when cyclists ignore traffic lights
- They get dazzled when very bright cycle lights are not adjusted correctly
- They get annoyed when cyclists ride two abreast (even though it's not illegal)
- They sometimes find it difficult to predict what a cyclist is going to do
- They don't always understand why cyclists sometimes ride in the middle of the lane
- When driving large vehicles, they find it very difficult to see cyclists on their nearside, even with all their extra mirrors



# Junctions and Roundabouts

## Drivers

75% of collisions involving a bike happen at a junction, with the most common reason being drivers 'failing to look properly'.

This is a classic Sorry Mate, I Didn't See You accident. But, the cyclist did not suddenly appear; most ride at about 12mph, which gives plenty of time to see them, and many wear high visibility clothing.

When a driver does not see a cyclist who is in plain view, it is often because they simply did not have a good look for long enough, or because they were not expecting to see a cyclist ('looked but did not see').

To help reduce the chances of this happening, when you get to a junction, stop or slow down. Then look once, look twice and look again for the cyclist.

### THINK BIKE.



**Tip** If a cyclist seems to be staring at you, they are not being aggressive. Cyclists try to make eye contact to make sure that you have seen them.

**Tip** You have spotted the cyclist (great). Avoid the temptation to pull out in front of them; the cyclist may be going faster than you think and have to brake heavily to avoid a collision. Be patient and share the road sensibly.

## Advanced stop lines

Advanced stop lines for cyclists are used at many traffic light junctions to create a safe and more visible location for the rider ahead of the traffic.

**Tip** Avoid crossing the advanced stop line and don't stop in the cyclist stopping area.

## Cyclists

Failing to look properly is also a common mistake made by cyclists, and contributes to 42% of cyclist collisions at junctions.

**Tip** Don't assume that a driver has seen you, or even if they have, that they will wait for you to go past. Be ready to stop or take avoiding action if a driver pulls out.

**Tip** Collisions also happen at junctions when cyclists waiting to pull out, mis-judge the approaching vehicle's speed.

**Tip** When turning across or joining fast moving traffic give yourself plenty of space and time to safely make that manoeuvre.

**Tip** If waiting ahead of an HGV remember that immediately in front of the cab is one of the driver's blind spots and he may not have seen you.

**Tip** If intending to turn left maintain your lane position, don't be in the gutter as this may convince the driver that there is room to squeeze past.

# Turning Left

## Drivers

Large vehicles turning left, especially heavy goods vehicles, present a particular danger for cyclists.

If you are turning left, your vehicle will move very close to the kerb as you turn. If a cyclist is on the inside of your vehicle, you may knock the rider over, or even crush them underneath the vehicle.



**Tip** Always check your mirrors, especially nearside wing mirrors and remember to indicate well in advance to warn the cyclist that you intend to turn. Always think bike when making that left turn.

**Tip** If a cyclist is already waiting at a junction, pull up behind them, rather than alongside them, and let them clear the junction before you turn.

**Tip** If a cyclist is ahead of you as you approach a junction you are going to turn into, slow down and let the cyclist pass the junction before you turn. Don't overtake the rider and then turn across their path.

## Cyclists

**Tip** NEVER be tempted to ride down the inside of any vehicle (especially a bus or lorry) that is waiting at a junction. Hold back and stay behind where the driver can see you in their mirrors. Be patient and don't squeeze down the inside by the gutter.

**Tip** When a large vehicle turns left, it cuts in very close to the kerb (it may move out to the right first) and the space on its inside will disappear. This is the last place you want to be!

**Tip** Even with all their extra mirrors, drivers of large vehicles find it very difficult to see cyclists on the inside of their vehicle.

**Tip** If a large vehicle comes up alongside you while you are waiting at a junction, assume it may turn left, even if they are not signalling. If possible move away from the danger area.

**Tip** If a vehicle overtakes you close to a left turn junction, keep a safe gap behind the vehicle in case the driver cuts in front of you to turn left.



# Overtaking

## Drivers

If you are not a cyclist it's very difficult to imagine how intimidating it is to be overtaken by a vehicle too closely. When overtaking a cyclist, give them as much space as you would a car.

Cyclists are easily affected by side winds which make them wobble or even lose balance. They may have to swerve out to avoid a pothole or raised manhole cover. Give them plenty of SPACE when overtaking.

**Tip** Don't be tempted to squeeze past when there really isn't room, for example when there's oncoming traffic, the road narrows or where you cannot see far enough ahead.

**Tip** Don't drive right up behind the cyclist. Hang back, be patient and wait until it is safe to overtake.

**Tip** Once you have overtaken the cyclist, give them plenty of room before pulling in. It can be dangerous and very annoying to pull in just past the rider.

**Tip** If you are sitting in a parked vehicle, check that there isn't a cyclist approaching before you open a door to get out. Open the door with your opposite hand, as this puts you in a more natural position to look down the side and behind your vehicle.

## Cyclists

**Tip** When a driver is courteous, give a signal to thank them.

**Tip** Always have a good look behind before you pull out to overtake a parked car, or other obstacle, and give the driver behind plenty of time to react. Signal if necessary.

**Tip** When overtaking a parked car, remember to leave enough room in case a door opens ('leave a door and a bit more') and be ready for someone to open a door as you pass.

**Tip** If overtaking a line of parked vehicles, stay out until you've passed them all; don't pull back in if there's only a short gap between the vehicles.

**Tip** Don't forget to look out for pedestrians crossing between parked vehicles.



# Road Positioning

## Drivers

Cyclists are trained to ride away from the gutter where there may be debris and grid covers.

In normal conditions, a cyclist will ride in what is known as the 'secondary position', approximately 1/3 into the carriageway.

However, sometimes they will need to ride further out in what is called the 'primary position', to improve visibility or to deter drivers from squeezing past where the road narrows, for example at a pedestrian island. Whilst riding in the primary position a cyclist will be in the middle of the road between the kerb and centre line.



**Tip** When you see a cyclist move out, remember they are trained to do this to protect themselves and are not doing it to deliberately hold you up. They will move back into the secondary position when it is safe.

**Tip** Be patient and hold back for a few moments.

## Cyclists

Assuming the correct road position is key to staying safe.

**Tip** Don't ride in the gutter; there may be debris and grid covers, and it will encourage drivers to squeeze past you even if there isn't enough room.

**Tip** In normal conditions, ride in the 'secondary position', approximately 1/3 into the carriageway.

**Tip** Ride in the 'primary position', which is in the middle of your lane when you need to improve your visibility or discourage drivers from squeezing past where the road narrows.

**Tip** Try not to hold up drivers unnecessarily; move back into the secondary position when it is safe to do so.

## Riding together

Never ride more than two abreast, and ride in single file on narrow or busy roads and when riding round bends.

## Cycle Lanes

### Drivers

Cycle Lanes are not always continuous and the cyclist will have to re-enter traffic. When this happens give the rider plenty of room to merge with the traffic flow.

### Cyclists

When you have to re-join the road from a cycle lane, check that you can safely enter the traffic flow first. Have a good look over your right shoulder.

# Turning Right

## Drivers

Inexperienced cyclists can find moving into the middle of the road and waiting to turn right a daunting manoeuvre. If you see a cyclist in this position give them as much space as you can.

If you are coming towards the cyclist it's better not to flash your lights as this might cause confusion.

**Tip** Don't overtake a cyclist who is about to turn right. Give them time to make the turn.



## Cyclists

**Tip** Always have a really good look over your right shoulder to check that it is safe to pull out to turn right.

**Tip** Remember to give a clear signal (3 seconds minimum) to tell drivers what you intend to do.

**Tip** Don't signal and pull out expecting the driver to slow down. Before making the turn, look behind again; this is known as a 'lifesaver' look for a good reason.

**Tip** If you don't feel safe or confident enough to turn right on a particular road, keep to the left and if necessary stop at the kerb, and cross when it is safe.

**FINAL TIP** Treat every road user as if they were a member of your family.

Much of the antagonism between drivers and cyclists is due to misunderstanding each other's needs and actions. Remember there is no US and THEM. We are all members of our road community.

# Lights

## Cyclists

Riding without lights at night is extremely dangerous and something which drivers find annoying.

Approaching a cyclist dressed in dark clothing without lights may mean the driver sees the rider very late, which can be a frightening experience for both parties.

The Highway Code says:

**At night** your cycle **MUST** have white front and red rear lights lit. It **MUST** also be fitted with a red rear reflector (and amber pedal reflectors, if manufactured after 1/10/85). White front reflectors and spoke reflectors will also help you to be seen. Flashing lights are permitted but it is recommended that cyclists who are riding in areas without street lighting use a steady front lamp.

**Tip** It's also a good idea to wear bright or fluorescent clothing in the day.

Remember: BE SAFE BE SEEN.

# Horn

## Drivers

Avoid using your horn aggressively, even if you are not at fault and a cyclist or other road user has acted carelessly.

**Tip** Only sound your horn to alert other people of your presence.

**Tip** Don't sound your horn whilst overtaking a cyclist as this can be construed as aggressive