

# Before You Ride

## Inspect Your Equipment

Keep your bike in top shape. Take it to a bike shop for professional inspection. Secure any loads tightly to a rack. Before every ride be sure to:

- make sure the brakes work properly and don't rub
- check tires and make sure they are firm
- make certain quick releases and other bolts are tight

## Be Prepared

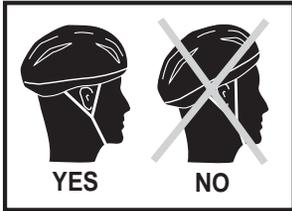
Always take along basic tools, patch kit, pump, a few extra dollars, and 35¢ in change (for a pay phone). In addition to waterbottles, pack an energy bar just in case your ride lasts longer than expected.

## Dress for the Occasion

Wear bright colors to be easily seen. Don't wear loose clothing and don't leave any laces or strings dangling or they may get tangled in the gears or wheels. Cycling gloves protect your hands and help reduce fatigue. NEVER wear headphones on a bike—you need all your senses!

## Wear a Helmet -- Correctly

Helmets should be worn everytime you ride to prevent a head injury. However, if your helmet doesn't fit properly, it isn't likely to serve you well if you crash. Do the "Eyes, Ears, Mouth Test"™ every time you go biking. First place the helmet on your head—it should be level and snug. If it slides around, you need to insert additional pads.



- Eyes - looking up past your eyebrows, you should see the very edge of the helmet
- Ears - the straps should meet right under your ear lobes
- Mouth - when buckled, the strap should be loose enough so you can breath and insert two fingers between it and your chin, but tight enough that if you drop your jaw you can feel the helmet pull down on the top of your head

Ensuring a good helmet fit at first can take some time. Some helmets need minor adjustments every day, but usually only take a moment to adjust properly. If you have problems, your local bike shop can help.

*The "Eyes, Ears, Mouth Test"™ is a trademark of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine*



**Vermont Bicycle  
and  
Pedestrian Coalition**  
Safety • Education • Access

The Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition is working to create a state-wide environment that promotes cycling and walking as safe and valued modes of transportation and recreation.

We value bicycling and walking:

- For transportation
- For fun and fitness
- To enhance our communities and environment

Contact the VBPC for information or membership at:

**Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition**

P.O. Box 4003  
Burlington, VT 05406-4003

### Show your support for VBPC

----- ✂

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Phone .....

e-mail .....

Here is my contribution of:

- \$10 Basic Membership
- \$20 Support Membership
- \$45 Advocate Membership
- Other Contribution

**Sure you can balance  
that bicycle --  
but do you know how to  
DRIVE a bike?**



## Bicycle Driving Safety Tips

Driving a bicycle requires care and courtesy. Drive your bike in a responsible manner by obeying all traffic laws and being predictable. It can be tempting to ignore the rules of the road, but this is exactly when most crashes occur. The simple rule is:

**“Bicyclists fare best when they act and are treated as drivers of vehicles.”**

Please review the bicycle driving safety tips inside. By following the rules of the road, you become a good ambassador for bicycling.

**Thanks & Have Fun!**

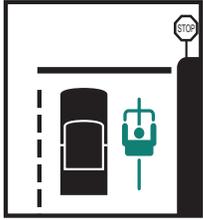
Brought to you by the **Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition** in cooperation with:



# Rules of the Road

## Be Predictable—Act Like a Vehicle

Drive your bicycle in a smooth and predictable manner. Look ahead to allow time to calmly avoid obstacles. Communicate your intentions and signal before changing lanes or direction. Avoid abrupt maneuvers whenever possible. Anticipate not only your actions, but the actions of others.

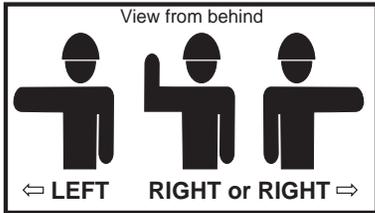
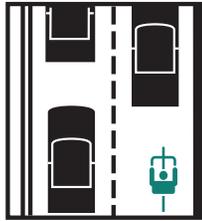


## Obey All Traffic Laws

Bicycles have the same duties and responsibilities as vehicles and must obey all traffic laws, including stop signs and traffic signals. It can be tempting to ignore traffic rules, but this is when most crashes occur.

## Ride with Traffic

Always ride on the right side of the road. Do not pass motorists on the right. If you approach an intersection with a right turn lane and intend to continue straight, ride in the through lane with traffic.

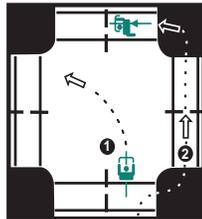


## Signal All Turns

Look back before you make a lane change or turn. Signal safely in advance using one of these signals.

## Making Left Hand Turns

You may turn left as a vehicle • by moving into the left side of the travel lane (or left turn lane). **OR** Cross like a pedestrian • by stopping, dismounting, and walking across crosswalks.



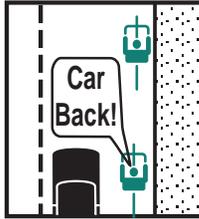
## Always Ride with Lights at Night

State Law requires a white headlight visible from at least 500 feet and a rear red reflector visible from 300 feet when riding at night. Flashing tail lights and/or reflective clothing are recommended. See and be seen!

# Riding with Others

## Communicate with Other Cyclists

Let other cyclists behind you know when you approach hazards. Inform cyclists in front when you are drafting. Call out with a friendly greeting when you are passing. Do not shout "All Clear" at stop signs as each cyclist must take personal responsibility and obey traffic laws.

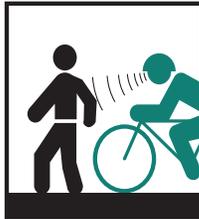
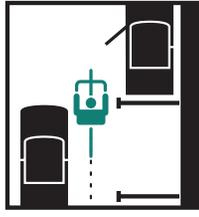


## Ride Single File in Traffic

It is legal to ride two abreast in Vermont if traffic is not impeded by doing so. However, in heavy traffic ride single file except when passing others. Also, notify other bicyclists of approaching traffic.

## Watch for Potential Hazards

Scan the road 100 feet ahead for hazards such as debris, tracks, drains, or potholes. Allow time to maneuver around these hazards and negotiate with traffic. Avoid riding into an opening car door by giving yourself 3 or 4 feet.

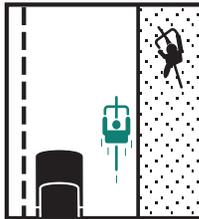
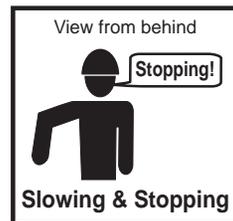


## Warn Others When Approaching

Bicyclists must yield to pedestrians. Be courteous by warning others with a ring of your bell or a friendly greeting. Allow plenty of space when passing.

## Signal Before Stopping

When you are preparing to slow or stop, indicate your intentions to others using hand and verbal warnings.



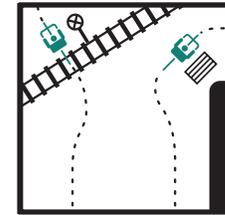
## Pull Off Road When Stopped

If you need to stop for any reason, pull completely off the road to avoid obstructing other bicyclists and other road users.

# Other Important Tips

## Watch for Animals

Animals are often excited by the movement of bicycles. Always yield to horses. Most unleashed dogs are not dangerous. Simply stopping may halt their chase. A forceful "Stay!" or "NO!" also works well. Place the bike between you and the dog if needed.

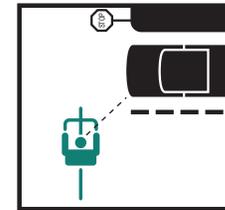
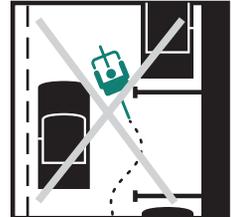


## Use Care at Rail Crossings

Always cross train tracks at right angles and avoid drain grates to prevent your front wheel getting pulled down.

## Don't Swerve Between Parked Cars

Drive your bike in a predictable manner by riding in a straight line.



## Make Eye Contact

The best way to communicate your intentions with other drivers is to get their attention with eye contact.

## • Be Prepared for Weather Conditions

If it's raining, allow yourself extra distance to stop. If it's clear use ample sunscreen and drink extra water.

## • Anticipate Hills by shifting in advance.

## • Only Pass on the LEFT of other cyclists. Call out a friendly greeting to warn them.

## • Create Gaps in the line to allow space for passing cyclists or cars to advance.

## • Think for Yourself - Fight Mob Mentality

When riding in a large group, the "strength in numbers" can be intoxicating—remember that individual thinking and action is essential for everyone's safety.

*Icons courtesy of City of Portland OR and the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. Thanks also to Maine for encouragement, support and flyer design.*