

Sharing the road together:

Drivers and cyclists

June 2023

Cycling is a fantastic way to get and stay fit. Regular cycling can also 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 of those surveyed¹ 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.

The Highway Code²

In 2022, a number of changes were made to the [Highway Code](#) to try and improve the safety of people walking, cycling and riding horses. One of the key changes was the introduction of the 'hierarchy of road users'. This places those road users most likely to be injured in an event of a collision³ at the top of the hierarchy. However, the hierarchy does not remove the need for everyone to behave responsibly. The road users most likely to be injured in the event of a collision are pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and motorcyclists, with children, older adults and disabled people being more at risk. This concept is clarified through the three H rules.

- **Rule H1** - All road users should be aware of the Highway Code. All road users are considerate and are responsible for their safety and the safety of others. Those in charge of vehicles that can cause the greatest harm in the event of a collision bear the greatest responsibility to take care and reduce the danger they pose to others. This principle applies most strongly to drivers of large goods and passenger vehicles, vans/minibuses, cars/taxis and motorcycles.

Cyclists, horse riders and drivers of horse drawn vehicles likewise have a responsibility to reduce danger to pedestrians.

None of this detracts from the responsibility of ALL road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, to have regard for their own and other road users' safety.

- **Rule H2** – At a junction you should give way to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross. Pedestrians

¹ YouGov Survey commissioned by RoSPA, March 2015

² GOV.UK, The Highway Code: 8 changes you need to know from 29 January 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022> - accessed June 2023



20 mph zones and speed limits factsheet Feb 2017

have priority at crossings and at light-controlled crossing when they have a green signal. Cyclists should give way to pedestrians on shared use cycle tracks and horse riders on bridleways. Only pedestrians may use the pavement. Pedestrians may use any part of the road and use cycle tracks unless there are prohibiting signs.

- **Rule H3** – Motorists should not cut across cyclists or horse riders going ahead, when they are turning into or coming out of a junction or changing lane. Motorists should stop and wait for a safe gap if necessary when at junctions, in stationary or slow-moving traffic or traveling around a roundabout.



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Junctions

Drivers

72% of cyclists injured on Great Britain's roads are killed within 20 metres of a junction. The most common contributory factor in collisions involving cyclists is 'driver or rider failed to look properly'. Almost half of collisions (46 per cent) involving a pedal cyclist involve a car.⁴

Make sure you are aware of what is around you. Motorists must give way to people who are crossing or waiting to cross a junction. If necessary slow or stop to make sure pedestrians have cleared the junction before turning in.

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.

Tip: When approaching a junction, stop or slow down. Then look once, look twice, and look again for the cyclist.

Cyclists

People cycling ahead have priority over traffic waiting to turn into or out of a junction. However, cyclists still need to be observant and watch out for drivers intending to turn across their path, as motorists may not be always able to see you. 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: If you are turning right, check to ensure it is safe then signal and move to the centre of the road. Wait until there is a safe gap in the traffic to complete your turn.

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

Tip: **Never** be tempted to ride down the inside of any vehicle (especially a larger vehicle, such as a bus or lorry) that is waiting at a junction. Hold back and stay behind where the driver can see you in their mirrors.

Tip: When a large vehicle turns left, it cuts in very close to the kerb (it may move out to the right first)

⁴ Department for Transport (2022) 'Reported road casualties in Great Britain: pedal cycle factsheet, 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-pedal-cyclist-factsheet-2021/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-pedal-cycle-factsheet-2021> - accessed June 2023

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and the space on its inside will disappear. This is the last place you want to be!

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

Roundabouts

Drivers

All motorists should give priority to cyclists on roundabouts. You should not attempt to overtake people when in a roundabout and allow cyclists space to move across your path as they travel around the roundabout

Cyclists

When going left or straight on, cyclists should stay in the left-hand lane. When turning right, cyclists may go in the right-hand lane, if they would prefer.

Tip: Give plenty of room to long and larger vehicles at a roundabout as they need more space to manoeuvre

Tip: Take care when crossing exits and entrances to the roundabout and remember motorists may not always see you. Try and gain eye contact with the motorist.

Tip: Watch out for vehicles crossing your path as they enter and exit the roundabout.

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 can 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: You may cross a double-white line if necessary (and safe to do so) if overtaking a cyclist or horse travelling at less than 10mph.

Tip: Don't be tempted to squeeze past when there really isn't room, for example, when there is oncoming traffic, the road narrows or sightlines ahead are limited.

Tip: Give at least 1.5 metres of space when overtaking cyclists or 2 metres for pedestrians or horses. Give road users even more space if you are passing at speeds above 30mph. Wait behind them if it's unsafe or you are not able to meet these clearances.

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 is dangerous to pull in just past the rider.

Tip: If you 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: You can overtake slower moving or stationary traffic on the left or right, but proceed with caution. Be particularly careful when passing larger vehicles as drivers may not always be able to see you.

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.

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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 need to road to ride away from the kerb, so that they can avoid debris, drains and service covers where possible.

Be aware that sometime cyclists may swerve at the last minute, this is often to avoid potholes or other debris in the road.

Be aware that in stationary or slow-moving traffic cyclist may approach on your left or right hand side. Cyclist are allowed to do this.

Cyclist can ride in the centre of the lane, This helps them to be as visible as possible.. This may be for several reasons such as turning, avoiding obstructions or the road narrowing. If you see a cyclist moving out, be patient and hold back 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: On busy roads, keep at least 0.5 metres away from the kerb edge. On quiet lanes, or in slow moving traffic, ride in the centre of your lane.

Tip: When riding in groups be considerate of other road users, you are allowed to ride two abreast. This can be safer to do so especially when riding with children.

Tip: Be aware of motorists, if the road is narrow or is particularly bendy you may want to stop or slow down to allow them to overtake when it is safe to do so.

Tip: Try to remember to signal to drivers if you have to move out from the left-hand side of your lane. This will help motorists understand your intentions and can discourage drivers from squeezing past.

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

Lights

Riding without lights at night is extremely dangerous. 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.