



# Safety Tips for Both Bicyclists and Motorists



**Keeping  
Everyone Safe  
on the Road**

# FOR BICYCLISTS

01

## WEAR A PROPERLY FITTING HELMET

In a majority of bicycle deaths, the most serious injuries are to the head. Helmet use is the single most effective way to prevent a head injury resulting from a bicycle crash.

A well-fitted helmet is snug, level and low.



Properly designed and tested helmets carry a certification sticker from the U.S. Consumer Protection Safety Commission (CPSC).

Look for this sticker inside the helmet.



# FOR BICYCLISTS

## 02

### **RIDING AFTER DARK**

When riding at dusk or after dark, appropriate lights and reflective gear are required. AAA recommends all bicycles operated at night have:

- 1) a white headlight in the front;
- 2) a red reflector or a flashing red light on the rear; and
- 3) white or yellow reflectors on the pedals, shoes or ankles.

Light colored or reflective clothing is also recommended at night for extra caution and visibility.

More bicycle fatalities occur between 6:00pm and midnight nationwide than any other time.



# FOR BICYCLISTS

## 03

### **IMPAIRED RIDING IS ILLEGAL**

Never ride a bike under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Nationwide, about 1 in 5 bicyclists killed in collisions are legally intoxicated with a .08 Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) or higher. Some states have specific laws that prohibit bicycling while intoxicated, and impose stricter penalties for riders under the legal drinking limit.

Just one drink can impair your vision, judgment and balance. Slower reactions times can be dangerous near fast moving cars. Don't mix drinking and biking.





# FOR BICYCLISTS



## 04

### **RIDE DEFENSIVELY, WATCH OUT FOR DRIVEWAYS AND PARKED CARS**

Slow down and pay careful attention to the presence of vehicles when approaching driveways, side streets and parking lots. Try to make eye contact with motorists when possible.

Ride as far right as safe and reasonable, but leave at least 3 feet of space between you and parked vehicles. Take extra space in the traffic lane if needed to stay outside a car's "door zone".

## 05

### **GO WITH THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC**

Bicyclists must follow the same rules and laws as motorists. Check your local laws to see if they require riding in the same direction as traffic, not against it.

Riding on the wrong side of the road is one of the leading causes of bicycle collisions in some states. Stay on the right side of the road on two-way streets, and be predictable when operating any vehicle, including bicycles.



# FOR BICYCLISTS

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## 06

### KNOW WHERE TO RIDE

Bicyclists should ride as far to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway as safe and reasonable when moving slower than the speed of traffic. A bicyclist must ride in a bike lane when available. A bicyclist may use the full traffic lane in many situations to a) avoid road hazards (e.g. potholes, debris, construction); b) when a travel lane is too narrow for a bicycle and motor vehicle to share side-by-side; c) when preparing to make a left turn; d) when preparing to turn right from a right-turn lane; or e) to pass others.

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## 07

### RIDE SINGLE FILE

AAA recommends riding as far to the right-hand curb as safe and reasonable, whether alone or with others, with the exceptions noted above. This means riding single file and allowing faster moving vehicles to pass safely.

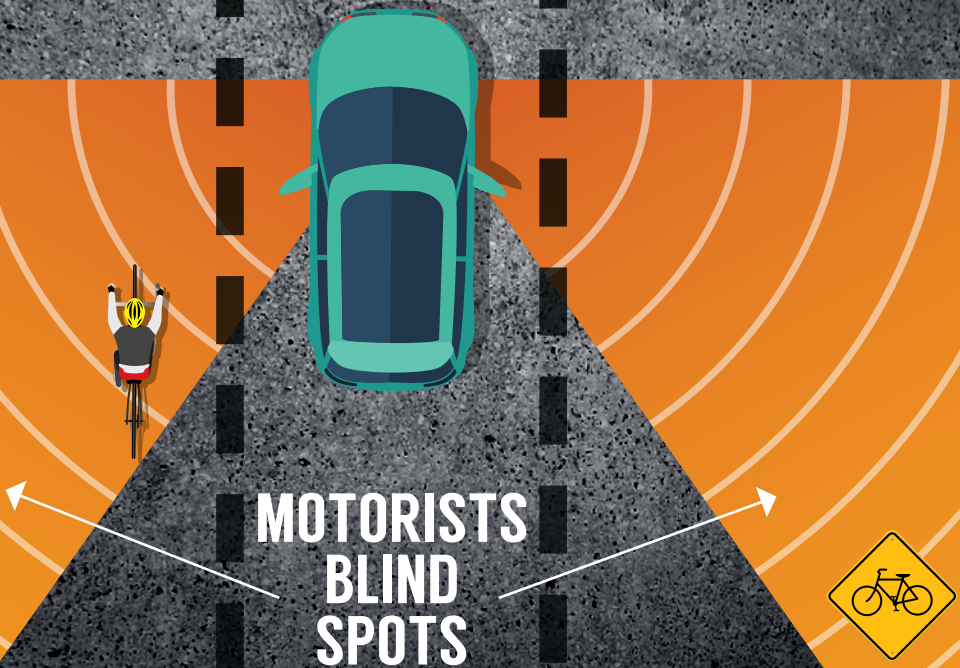


# FOR BICYCLISTS

08

## BE CAUTIOUS OF BLIND SPOTS

Bicyclists are smaller than motor vehicles and can easily get lost in a driver's blind spot. Avoid motorist blind spots when possible and try not to stay in them too long. Also avoid swerving in and out between parked cars, as you are out of the motorist's line of sight.



# FOR BICYCLISTS

## 09

### STAY ALERT WHEN TURNING LEFT

Make left turns on a bicycle by carefully moving into the left hand lane when it is safe. Check, and double-check, for on-coming cars. Use a left-hand signal to indicate your intention to turn. Alternatively, stay on the right of an intersection and use the crosswalk as a pedestrian.

1

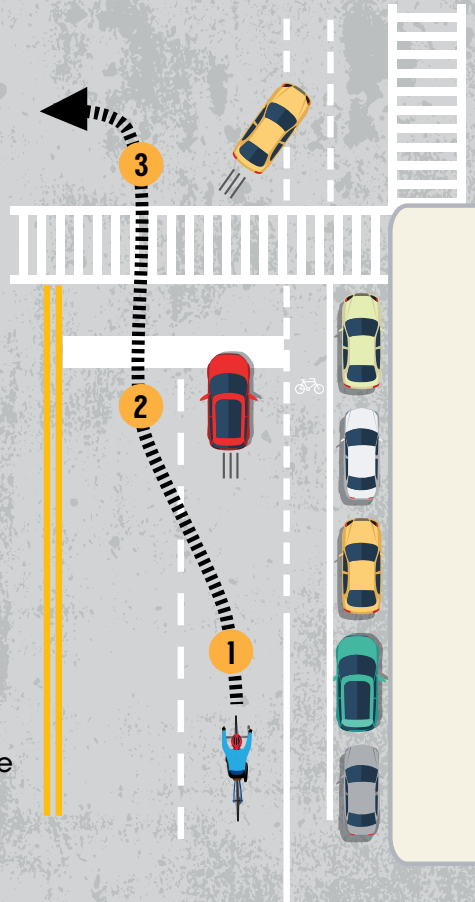
Check, and double-check, for cars. Use a left-hand signal to indicate your intention to change lanes or turn.

2

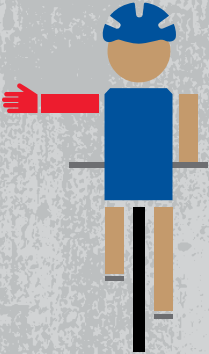
When it is safe, carefully move into the left-hand lane.

3

Complete your turn as any vehicle driver.

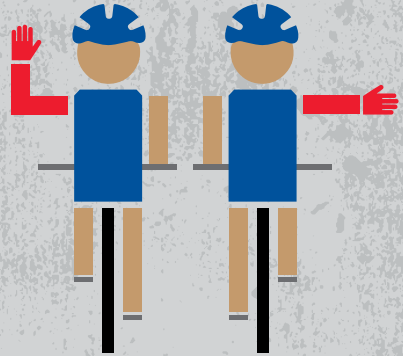


# FOR BICYCLISTS



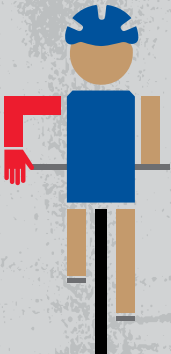
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**LEFT TURN:**  
Fully extend  
your left arm  
out to the side.



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**RIGHT TURN:**  
Fully extend your right arm  
out to the side or bend your  
left arm up at a right angle  
with your hand flat.



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**SLOWING OR STOPPING:**  
Extend your left arm out  
and down at a right angle  
with your hand open.

*Images are shown from the backside*





# FOR BICYCLISTS

10

## RIDING ON SIDEWALKS

Make sure your city or county allows riding on sidewalks and, if so, always ride slowly and be alert of doorways and driveways. Always yield to pedestrians and walk your bike, especially if the sidewalk is crowded. Stop before entering at intersections.

11

## MAKE EYE CONTACT IF POSSIBLE

Make sure motorists are aware of your presence. Communicate

your intent to drivers with hand signals and roadway positioning. A simple nod and a smile signaling “thank you” is always appreciated by other road users.



# FOR BICYCLISTS

12

## **PUT AWAY THE EARPHONES**

Avoid earphones covering, resting on, or inserted in both ears. Don't reduce your ability to hear a horn honk or other warnings. Keeping your ears open could save your life.

13

## **OBEY TRAFFIC LAWS**

Obey all traffic controls and signals, stopping at red lights and stop signs. Bicyclists have all the rights of motorists, and the same responsibilities to follow state and local traffic laws. Breaking the law could result in fines, citations and injuries.



# FOR MOTORISTS

01

## UNDERSTAND BICYCLISTS' RIGHTS

**Bicyclists have a right to ride on the street.**

Bicyclists occasionally need extra space when a lane is too narrow to share with cars, road hazards are present, or pavement conditions are poor. These are all situations where the law allows bicyclists to use the full lane, positioning themselves in the middle when necessary for safety.

02

## IMPAIRED DRIVING CAN BE FATAL

AAA studies show alcohol-impaired drivers are involved in more than 1 in 3 fatal crashes. Furthermore, a disproportionate number of crashes occur on weekends and evenings after alcohol consumption by road users. Staying alert behind the wheel is a major step in keeping all road users safe.



# FOR MOTORISTS

03

## **AVOID DISTRACTIONS**

Distracted driving, such as texting, grooming, or playing games, is very risky. The federal government estimates it accounts for more than 3,000 fatalities nationwide each year. Focus on driving to avoid collisions that can easily lead to serious injuries and fatalities.



# FOR MOTORISTS



## 04

### **AVOID EXCESSIVE SPEED**

Slow down when encountering bicyclists or pedestrians, and never exceed the speed limit.

Speed is a major factor in determining crash survival. Slowing down also gives you more time to react when something unexpected happens.

A person hit by a car going 20 mph has a 90% chance of survival but the same bicyclist hit by a car going 40 mph only has a 20% chance.



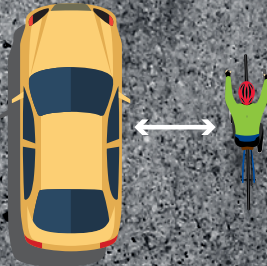


# FOR MOTORISTS

05

## THREE-FEET-FOR-SAFETY

AAA recommends giving bicyclists extra room — at least three feet — when passing them on the roadway. Don't attempt to pass unless you can do so safely. When driving on a two-lane road, don't try to pass on a curve or when an oncoming vehicle is approaching.



3 FEET  
MINIMUM



# FOR MOTORISTS

## 06

### TURNING LEFT

When making a left turn, be aware of the possible presence and speed of oncoming bicyclists. Bicyclists may be going faster than you think, so it's better to be cautious and wait for bicyclists to pass.



## 07

### TURNING RIGHT

When turning right, look over your right shoulder to scan for a bicyclist. This avoids colliding with a bicyclist in your blind spot or approaching fast on your right side. Don't try to rush past a bicyclist to turn right. Instead, slow down and turn right after the bicyclist has passed. Only enter bike lanes to turn right after making sure it's clear of bicyclists, and always signal.



# FOR MOTORISTS

## 08

### **LOOK BEFORE OPENING YOUR DOOR**

Always look for passing bicyclists before opening your car door when parked on the street, but especially when parked next to a bike lane.



Use your right hand to open the driver's side door, which will force turning your body. This will help you notice passing cars and bicycles.

## 09

### **SURPRISES CAN BE DANGEROUS**

Avoid using your car horn near bicyclists or pedestrians unless it's an emergency— it can cause them to startle and swerve into traffic or off the roadway and crash.



# FOR MOTORISTS

10

## **DON'T ASSUME**

Don't expect everyone to know traffic laws or to behave predictably, this includes all motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians, especially children.

Anticipate avoidance maneuvers by bicyclists. They may have to swerve to avoid a car door or other road hazards.

11

## **COMMUNICATION IS KEY**

Make eye contact, use your turn signals, or flash vehicle lights to let bicyclists know of your presence, and position your vehicle appropriately/legally for your maneuvering intentions.



# FOR MOTORISTS

12

## **BE COURTEOUS**

Don't let a bad encounter with one bicyclist influence your attitude towards all bicyclists. At the end of the day, we're all just trying to get to our destination safely.

13

## **RIDE A BIKE**

Bicycling is a fun, healthy, and eco-friendly option for taking shorter trips. Bicycling also provides a great learning opportunity to see the world from a different perspective.





AAA provides a broad array of community resources and traffic safety information. The safe bicycling and driving tips presented in this guide were prepared with valued assistance from law enforcement and bicycle safety organizations.



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