



# NEW YORK BICYCLING POCKET GUIDE



Prepared by the New York Bicycling Coalition





# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Getting around by bike is good for one's health and wallet, and the environment. But many people aren't sure about best practices are right for staying safe on roads shared by cars. Bicyclists are legally required to follow many of the same rules as motorists, but there are a few of exceptions and special rules. This guide is here to help you.



The New York Bicycling Coalition created this guide to give you the information you need to feel confident getting around safely by bike. NYBC is a member-supported nonprofit that serves the State of New York and its residents by providing a clear and consistent voice for the interests of people who ride bikes and by promoting the safe use of the bicycle as an important mode of transportation, sport, recreation, health, environmental protection, energy conservation, tourism and economic development.

To learn more about NYBC and become a NYBC member visit [www.nybc.net](http://www.nybc.net).

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# PREPARING FOR YOUR RIDE



## PREPARING FOR YOUR RIDE

# HELMET

Helmets are **required** if you are under 14 years old. Child passengers ages one through four must wear approved bicycle helmets and ride in a child safety seat. Children under the age of one are prohibited from being transported on a bicycle. [Section 1238-5]

Every bicyclist should wear an approved helmet to reduce the risk of sustaining a serious head injury. A helmet should fit squarely on top of the head in a level position and cover the top of the forehead extending down to about an inch above the eyebrows. The helmet should not be able to slide back and forth or rock from side to side.



## PREPARING FOR YOUR RIDE

# LIGHTS



Lights on the front and back of your bicycle are **required** during hours of darkness. White lights should be used in the front, and red lights should be used in the rear of your bicycle. They should be visible from at least 200 feet away. [Section 1236-a]



### USE SOME SOUND!

Always use a bell or horn that can be heard at least a hundred feet away.

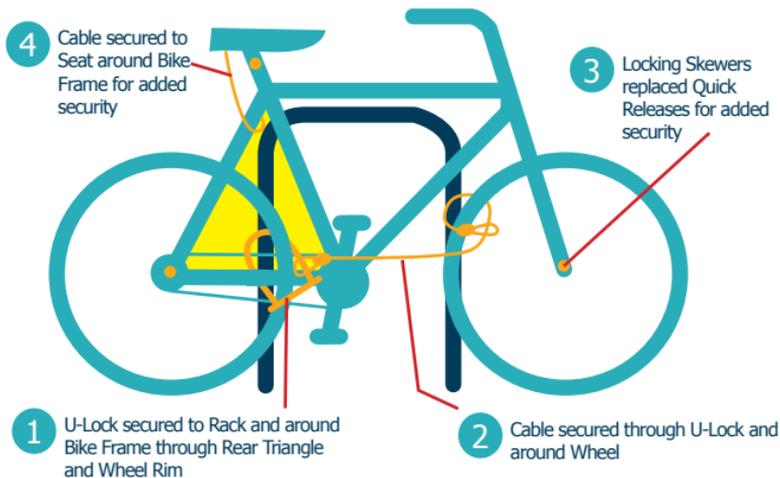
When passing, ring, honk, or say "on your left!" especially on multi-use paths when passing other bicyclists or pedestrians.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR RIDE

# LOCK

For the best protection from theft, use a metal chain or U-lock. Be sure to lock through your back wheel and the frame of your bike (the rear triangle) so that no one can remove either separately. Attach a loop cable around the front wheel and the other end of the U-lock.

### USING THE REAR TRIANGLE



## PREPARING FOR YOUR RIDE

# CARGO

There are many ways to carry goods on and behind your bicycle. Some great ways include front or rear baskets, panniers, or trailers.

When carrying any package or article on your bike, you **must** be able to keep at least one hand upon the handle bars at all times. [Section 1235]

Bicycle trailers can also be used to carry children. When carrying children in an enclosed trailer, they should be buckled in and wear a helmet.

Do not dangle purses or bags from your handlebar. It can throw off your steering or get caught in the front wheel, throwing you over the handlebar when the front wheel jams to a stop.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR RIDE

# TUNING YOUR BIKE

Before you ride, you should always be sure that your bike is in good operating condition. Your local bike shop can perform a full tune-up but here are some necessary checks you to perform...

- 1. Chain** – Keep it clean. Apply a spray cleaner to the chain and wipe away with a dry rag. Apply lube afterward.
- 2. Breaks** – Replace worn pads. Breaks should be capable of making the tires skid on dry level pavement.
- 3. Tires** – Check the pressure. Use a tire pump to inflate to the recommended level, which is written on the sidewall of every tire.



## PREPARING FOR YOUR RIDE

# BIKE FIT

Picking out the right size bike will ensure that you have a more comfortable, more stable ride. Head to one of your local bike shops to get fitted, or see the last page of this guide for some helpful resources.

When fitting your bike, your bottom leg should maintain a slight bend to the knee, allowing you to step off your bike easily. Adjust your seat to get the height right.



## LEARN THE SKILLS

Before heading out, know what you're doing. Many organizations, bike shops and clubs offer basic skills courses for riding. See the last page of this guide for resources or go to [www.bikeleague.org/ridesmart](http://www.bikeleague.org/ridesmart) to find classes or watch videos.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR RIDE

# WHAT TO WEAR

You don't need to change your wardrobe or dress in Lycra to ride your bike for transportation.

Make sure your pant leg doesn't get caught in your bike chain by rolling it up or using a leg strap.

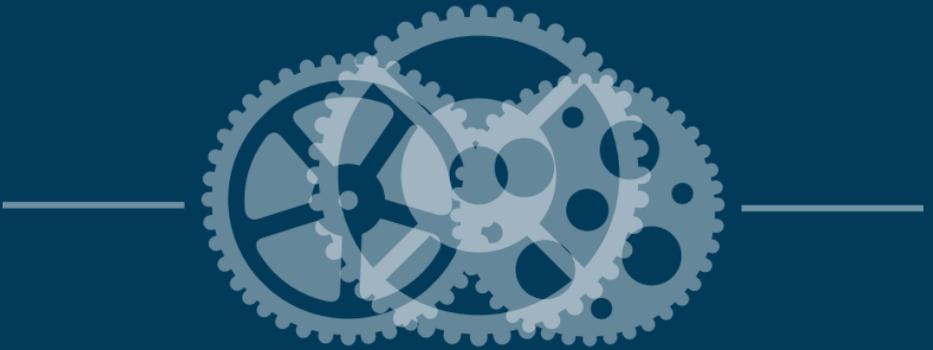
Reflectors are **required** on your bike spokes and pedal [Section 1236]. It is also smart to wear bright or reflective clothing so that you are visible to motorists when it's dark out or raining.



## WINTER RIDING

Riding in New York State can be cold, but layering properly will help you stick to your commute. Always be sure to cover your extremities – fingers, toes, and ears.

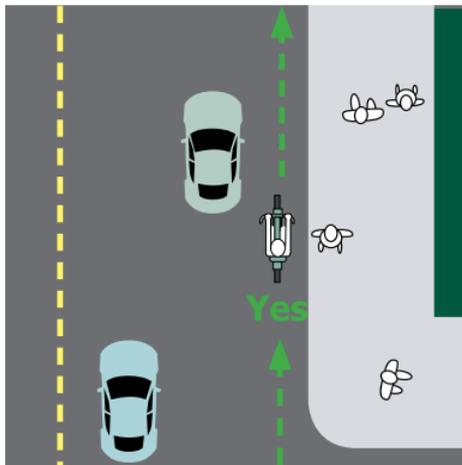
# RULES OF THE ROAD



# TURNING

Bicyclists **must** obey all traffic lights, signs and pavement markings, and must signal for turns on all roads, bike lanes or shared-use paths.

Use the same through or turning lanes as motorists, or you may choose to dismount and use the crosswalk as a pedestrian. After crossing an intersection, move to a usable right-hand shoulder or to the right side of the right-hand lane.

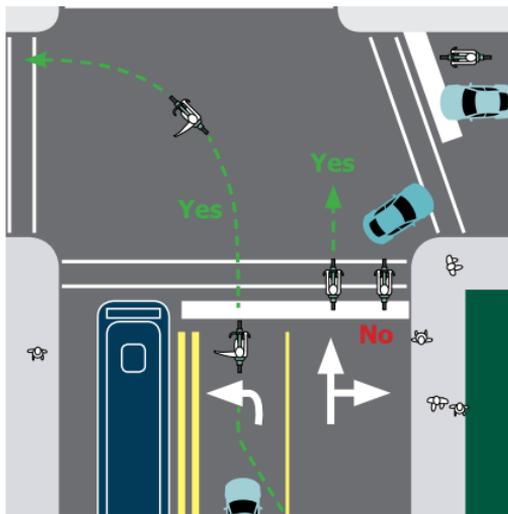


## RULES OF THE ROAD

# TURNING

When preparing for a left turn, move to the center of the lane and **signal** your direction. If there is more than one left turning lane, use the right-most one. Always signal before moving between lanes.

When preparing for either a right or left turn, move to the center of the lane to prevent a following motorist



from sharing the lane. If there is more than one left turn lane, use the one furthest to the right. After a left turn, move to the right as soon as it is safe to do so.

## RULES OF THE ROAD

# POSITIONING

If a car is turning right at a stop and you are going straight, position yourself left of the car to avoid being turned into.

Leave **3 feet** between yourself and parked cars so you can avoid a door that opens unexpectedly.



## RULES OF THE ROAD

# SIGNALING

These hand signals **must** be used to indicate turning so that drivers, other cyclists and pedestrians can be aware of your next move. If there is a choice between signaling and maintaining control of your bike, **always** maintain control and keep one hand on the handlebar at all times. [Section 1237]



Left Turn



Stop



Right Turn



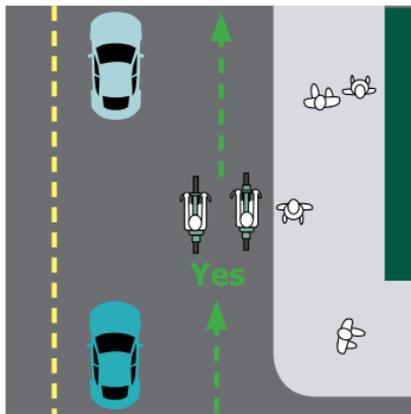
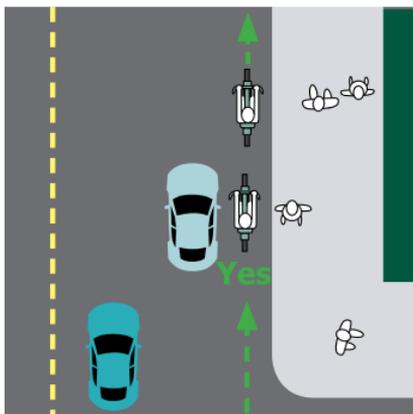
Alternate  
Right Turn

# RULES OF THE ROAD

## RIDING WITH OTHERS

You may ride two abreast on roadways, but must ride single file when being overtaken by other vehicles or when passing vehicles, pedestrians or other bicyclists.

You may only ride more than two abreast on a shoulder, lane or path intended for bicycling if there is sufficient space [Section 1234-b]

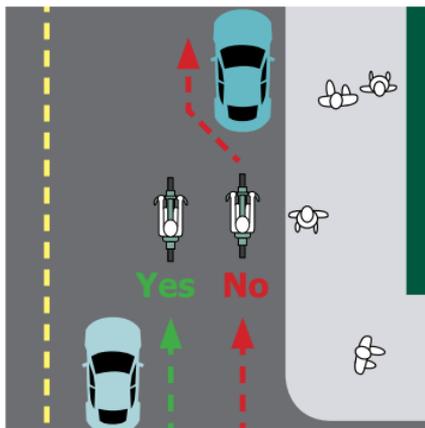


## RULES OF THE ROAD

# RIDING WITH TRAFFIC

Always ride in the **same** direction as traffic. Riding with traffic makes you more visible and predictable to motorists. [Section 1234]

Do not weave in and out of traffic. If there is no bicycle lane or it is unusable due to parked cars or other hazards, you must ride on the right shoulder or near the right edge of the roadway to



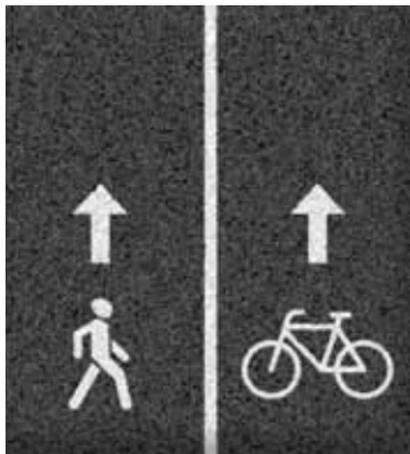
avoid undue interference with other traffic, unless the lane is too narrow, you are turning left, or you need to move further left to avoid hazards such as parked cars or debris. Leave 3 feet between yourself and parked cars to avoid a door that opens unexpectedly.

## RULES OF THE ROAD

# RIGHT OF WAY

The pedestrian always has the right of way at a crosswalk or on a sidewalk. Just like motorists, bicyclists must yield the right of way to a pedestrian.

However, if a pedestrian chooses to cross at an unmarked crossing, he or she must yield the right of way to bicycles and vehicles. [Section 1150-1152]



# WHERE TO RIDE



## WHERE TO RIDE

# ON ROAD

You have the legal right to ride a bicycle on most public highways, except interstate highways and certain



expressways. When riding on the road, you have all of the rights and are subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle. [Section 1231]



### BE ALERT

It is illegal to ride with both earbuds in when cycling. If you must wear earbuds, wear only one so you can hear others on the road.

## WHERE TO RIDE

# SHARED-USE

When riding on a shared-use path or greenway, cyclists are required to signal passing and turning others on bikes or on foot. The presence of an off-road path does not preclude your right to ride in the roadway. In some cases, a roadway may be safer or more convenient than a path.

### **Tips for Sharing the Trail:**

1. Respect all trail users
2. Yield to pedestrians and slower trail users
3. Obey the posted rules of the trail
4. Do not block the trail when stopping
5. For group rides, use no more than half of the width of the trail

## WHERE TO RIDE

# BIKE LANES

Bike lanes are designated street space for cyclists to ride. Where there are bike lanes, cyclists **must** use them. If the bike lane is unusable or hazardous, ride as close to the right as possible. [Section 1234-a]



## SIDEWALKS

Riding a bicycle on a sidewalk is not prohibited by New York State law, but municipalities may pass ordinances prohibiting bicycling on sidewalks. Riding on sidewalks can cause conflicts or crashes with pedestrians and motorists because they are not looking for you on the sidewalk. Except for very young cyclists under supervision, biking on sidewalks is not recommended.

# EMERGENCIES



# CRASHES

If you are involved in a crash on a public highway, you are required to report the crash to the Department of Motor Vehicles within **10 days**. If anyone over the age of 18 is involved in a crash, they must stop at the scene of the crash and provide their name and address to others involved. [Section 605, 1240]

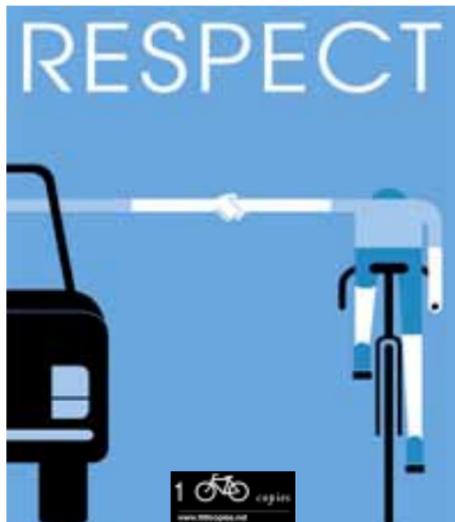
Find a list of resources to help you understand the rules and what to do if you are involved in a crash online at **[www.nybc.net/bike-law-resources](http://www.nybc.net/bike-law-resources)**

NYBC can help you find a lawyer in your region, should you be involved in a bicycle-related crash. Contact us at **[nybc@nybc.net](mailto:nybc@nybc.net)** for more information.

# GIVE & GET RESPECT

NYBC encourages mutual respect between cyclists and motorists. Cyclists should ride responsibly by complying with all traffic laws. This helps reduce conflicts with motorists.

Keeping our highways and streets safe is a **shared** responsibility. Remember, someone you care about drives a vehicle, don't turn your bike ride into a tragedy.



A little **respect** goes a long way!

# OTHER RESOURCES

## **Bike Law, Safety and Education**

New York Bicycling Coalition: [www.nybc.net](http://www.nybc.net)

Governor's Traffic Safety Committee: [www.safeny.ny.gov](http://www.safeny.ny.gov)

NY State Department of Transportation: [www.nysdot.gov](http://www.nysdot.gov)

Bike New York: [www.bike.nyc](http://www.bike.nyc)

Bike Law: [www.bikelaw.com](http://www.bikelaw.com)

Federal, State, Metropolitan and Local Agencies:  
[www.nybc.net/nys-transportation-agencies](http://www.nybc.net/nys-transportation-agencies)

## **Bike Groups and Tips**

League of American Bicyclists: [www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org)

Alliance for Biking and Walking: [www.bikewalkalliance.org](http://www.bikewalkalliance.org)

People for Bikes: [www.peopleforbikes.org](http://www.peopleforbikes.org)

Adventure Cycling: [www.adventurecycling.org](http://www.adventurecycling.org)

Bike Shops: [www.nybc.net/sponsor-group/bike-shop](http://www.nybc.net/sponsor-group/bike-shop)

Bike Clubs: [www.nybc.net/sponsor-group/bike-clubs](http://www.nybc.net/sponsor-group/bike-clubs)

Bike Organizations: [www.nybc.net/sponsor-group/organizations](http://www.nybc.net/sponsor-group/organizations)

Bike Rescues: [www.nybc.net/community-bike-shops](http://www.nybc.net/community-bike-shops)

Bike Maintenance: [www.bicycletimesmag.com](http://www.bicycletimesmag.com)



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