

Safe Bicycling

Do You Know the Rules of the Road?

Our mission is to make Livermore a safe and enjoyable place to ride bicycles. Bicyclists and motorists must realize they all have the same rights and responsibilities on the road. We will continue our efforts to better educate the community on safe bicycling practices and on promoting cycling for transportation, fitness and fun.

Laws You Should Know

The purpose of this brochure is to explain traffic laws that allow bicyclists and motor vehicles to share the road. Safe bicycling involves more than wearing the proper safety equipment and keeping your bike in good mechanical order – you must also learn the rules of the road. Bicyclists riding upon any street have all the rights and responsibilities of motor vehicle drivers. Nobody should ride a bicycle on the street without knowing the rules of the road. Here are just a few of the important traffic laws to keep in mind when riding your bicycle:

#1 BICYCLISTS ARE REQUIRED TO OBEY ALL TRAFFIC LAWS

Bicyclists are required to obey the same traffic laws as motor vehicles. This includes riding on the right-hand side of the road, stopping at stop signs, obeying traffic signals, and yielding to pedestrians crossing. Bicyclists should operate their bicycle as if they were a motor vehicle on the road. This includes using hand signals and making turns from the appropriate lane. If a cyclist is not comfortable riding according to the rules of the road, the cyclist should dismount their bicycle and walk his/her bicycle using pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks and crosswalks.

#2 RIDE YOUR BIKE IN THE SAME DIRECTION AS TRAFFIC

Bicycling on the wrong side of the street, against traffic, is one of the most dangerous traffic violations a bicyclist can make. Approximately 1/3 of all car-bike accidents involve wrong way cyclists. Riding with the flow of vehicular traffic is for the safety of the bicyclists because it increases the motorists' ability to see bicyclists. Motorists do not expect traffic (auto or bicycles) coming from the opposite direction and therefore, may not see a bicyclists riding in the wrong direction. The solution to the common cause of accidents is to ride with the flow of traffic.

#3 DO NOT RIDE YOUR BIKE ON THE SIDEWALK OR IN CROSSWALKS

In the City of Livermore, bicycles are allowed on the sidewalks in **residential areas only**. It is against the law to ride on the sidewalk in a business or commercial district, unless otherwise posted. The mix of bicycle and pedestrian traffic on the sidewalk can create conflicts. Sidewalks are designed for pedestrian use, and bicycles travel faster and cannot always avoid hitting pedestrians. In addition, motorists coming out of driveways are not expecting bicyclists on sidewalks. Crosswalks are designed as pedestrian facilities and if a cyclist chooses to cross the street in a crosswalk, he/she should dismount and walk their bicycle in the crosswalk. The solution to a common cause of accidents is to avoid riding on the sidewalk and walk bicycles across the street when in a crosswalk.

#4 CHILDREN UNDER 18 ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR A SAFETY HELMET

It is mandated under California State Law that children under 18 are required to wear an approved and properly fitted safety helmet. This also applies to children riding in trailers or bicycle carriers. Although adults are not required to wear them, it is highly recommended that adults also wear helmets. Helmets are designed to reduce the severity of head injuries and should be worn by all riders.

#5 BICYCLES MUST HAVE THE APPROPRIATE EQUIPMENT

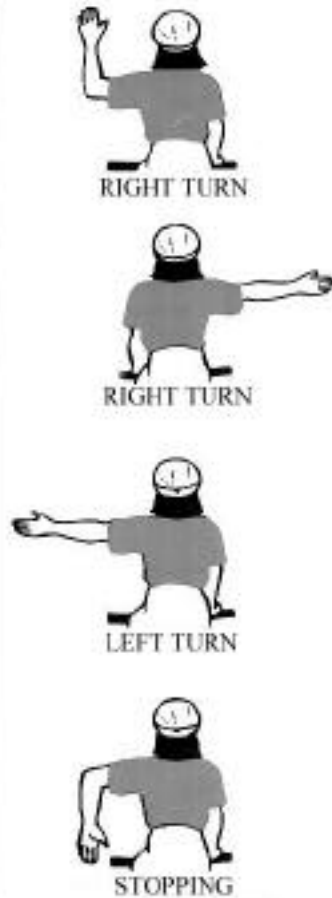
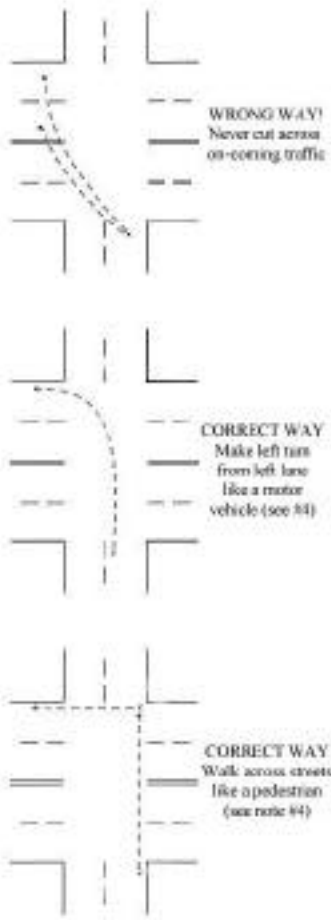
It is mandated under California State Law that bicycles have the appropriate equipment for operation in the public right of way. The appropriate equipment includes the following:

- A brake which will enable the operator to make one braked wheel skid on dry, level pavement.
- Handlebar grip area should not be raised higher than the level of the operator's shoulders.
- The bicycle shall be of appropriate size such that the operator can safely stop the bicycle, supporting it in an upright position with at least one foot on the ground, and restarting it in a safe manner.
- A bicycle operated during darkness shall be equipped with 1) a lamp emitting white light to the front of the bicycle that is visible from a distance of 300 feet, 2) a rear-mounted red reflector that is visible from a distance of 500 feet, 3) a white or yellow reflector mounted on each pedal visible from 200 feet on the front and rear of the bicycle, a yellow or white reflector on each side forward of the center of the bicycle and a white or red reflector on each side to the rear of the center of the bicycle.

Making Turns

There are certain rules which must be followed when you wish to make a turn. This is necessary to avoid accidents and to follow the rules of the road.

1. Left Turn Only and Right Turn Only lanes are marked with arrows on the pavement. You must obey them and turn only in the direction it tells you if you are in one of these lanes. Never continue going straight in a turn only lane.
2. Always give the proper signal by hand at least 100 feet in advance of your turn. The correct hand signals are illustrated here. Learn them and use them!
3. When turning, plan ahead. Don't wait until you get there before you decide what you are going to do.
4. When making a turn, follow the same rules as a motor vehicle. Use a hand signal, get into the appropriate lane for the turn and make the turn into the right hand lane of the street you're turning onto. If you are not yet comfortable with this level of bicycling, then it is advised that you act like a pedestrian and walk your bike across one street and then across the other.



Safety Tips

Remember a bicycle is a vehicle. Bicyclists share a complex traffic environment with other forms of transportation. If a bicycle is operated on a roadway, the bicyclist must follow the rules of the road. If the bicycle is operated on a sidewalk or crosswalk, one must walk their bicycle and act like a pedestrian. Responsible bicyclists are involved in fewer accidents. You can be a responsible bicyclist by following the rules of the road and remembering the following safety tips:

- Always obey all traffic regulations, signs and signals.
- Always ride in the same direction as traffic, as close to the right edge as practical.
- Use hand signal before making turns.
- Avoid sudden swerves. Pedal a straight course on the roadway, without weaving in and out of parked cars.
- When you ride in the dark, use front and rear lights, proper reflectors, and wear bright and reflective clothing.
- Always wear an approved and properly adjusted helmet when riding.
- Be sure your bike is in proper operating condition before each ride.
- Watch for turning vehicles and vehicles exiting driveways.
- Watch out for opening doors on parked cars. When riding next to parked cars, be sure to leave enough room for opening doors.
- Never ride double or carry packages that obstruct your view or interfere with your control of the bike
- Teach your children the rules of the road for their protection. The safest way to ride a bicycle is according to the rules of the road.