

TEACHER'S GUIDE

DRIVER-BICYCLIST SAFETY LESSON PLAN

This lesson plan is based off the League of Illinois Cyclist's Driver Education Video and Lesson:
<http://www.bikelib.org/safety-education/motorists/driver-education/>

OBJECTIVES

- To encourage drivers to share the road with bicyclists.
- To improve new drivers' understanding of bicyclists' actions and legal status on the road while promoting lawful, safer bicycling.
- To reduce car/bicyclist fatalities and injuries through bicycle awareness training for new drivers.

MATERIALS

- A 10 question student quiz that can be distributed
- A teacher's guide with test answers and background
- PowerPoint with embedded video
- A 6:22 minute video
- A 7:15 minute video

APPROACH

- Administer the quiz to students before showing the video to measure their knowledge about safely sharing the road.
- Begin the PowerPoint and play video.
- Continue PowerPoint while discussing the topics in the video and correct answers to the Quiz Questions.
- Leave the lesson open to discussion, comments, and questions from the classroom.

BACKGROUND

Drivers and bicyclists both get where they're going safely when they share the road and follow the same traffic rules. Both have the same rights to be on the road and with those rights come obligations. Drivers and bicyclists should obey speed limits, stop at traffic lights and stop signs, signal when changing lanes, yield the right-of-way and maintain safe distances from all vehicles, including bicycles.

Hundreds of bicyclists are killed and thousands are injured annually on our nation's roadways in crashes with motor vehicles. Car-bike crashes involving adult cyclists – who represent 70 percent of the fatalities – are most often caused by driver error. Dangerous, common mistakes by drivers can be reduced significantly through education and training.

Driver-Bicyclist Safety Test

(Circle the correct answer)

1. What direction should a bicyclist ride on the roadway?

- A. Against the traffic flow (facing traffic; left side for two-way streets).
- B. With the traffic flow (right side for two-way streets).
- C. Depends on whether it's a one-way or two-way street.
- D. A bicyclist may choose to ride either with or against the traffic flow.

Answer: B, Bicyclists riding with the traffic are more visible to drivers, particularly at intersections. Most car-bike crashes occur at intersections, not from cars hitting bicycles from behind. A bicyclist riding against the traffic flow at an intersection is not riding where motorists are looking when they make turns.

Also, when a bicyclist rides against the traffic, both the bicyclist and driver have less time to react than if they are traveling in the same direction. If a bicyclist is riding at 15 M.P.H. against the traffic and the approaching car is traveling at 35 M.P.H., they are traveling toward each other at a combined 50 m.p.h. If both are traveling in the same direction, then the approaching speed is reduced to 20 M.P.H., giving both more time to react.

Just like a driver, a bicyclist riding against the traffic is illegal and can be cited. Some cyclists, however, do ride against traffic, and drivers should be alert to that.

2. When a driver approaches a bicyclist from behind, the driver should:

- A. Gently tap on the horn to alert the bicyclist.
- B. Blast the horn for at least two seconds.
- C. Race the engine.
- D. Determine if they can safely pass.

Answer: D, Determine if they can safely pass. Tapping the horn, blasting the horn, or racing the engine can distract a bicyclist and may cause him to veer into the path of a vehicle, causing a collision. Also, all three actions are contrary to sharing the road and do not show courtesy to the bicyclist. Even tapping the horn, to politely let the bicyclist know a vehicle is approaching, can startle the bicyclist and should not be done. Bicyclists already expect cars to be on the road- and generally know when a vehicle is approaching. It is up to the driver to determine if and when they can safely pass the bicyclist.

3. What is the minimum safe distance for a driver to pass a bicyclist going in the same direction?

- A. Two Feet
- B. Four Feet
- C. Six Feet
- D. Fifteen Feet

Answer: B, More than three feet is a minimum safe passing distance – and the law in Pennsylvania. Definitely, motorists should pass bicyclists with more distance, if they can. Less than four feet, the driver and bicyclist have less space for safe maneuvering. A bicyclist needs the extra space to avoid a pothole, broken glass or a storm grate and not be endangered by cars. In less than four feet, a motorist can clip a bicyclist with a mirror. If the driver travels at a fast speed, the distance should be much more than four feet because a vehicle creates wind currents that affect a bicyclist's stability. When approaching younger bicyclists, drivers should allow even more space because children's movements can be unpredictable.

Cars are required to give 4' to cyclists and pass at a PRUDENT AND REASONABLE SPEED, but ONLY IF IT'S SAFE TO PASS. While they may cross a double-yellow line to pass a bicyclist, motorists should not pass on blind curves or hills or in situations that force opposing traffic to the opposite shoulder or off the road. If it's not safe to pass a car, it's probably not safe to pass a bicycle either.

Intentionally driving too close to bicyclists, either as a prank or to intimidate them, is a crime. If this harassment causes a serious injury, the driver can be charged with a felony

4. A bicyclist should:

- A. Always ride on a sidewalk.
- B. Always hug the side of the road (ride on the edge) no matter what.
- C. Ride as close to the side of the road as practical.
- D. Block traffic for no good reason.

Answer: C, State law says that bicyclists should ride as close to the right side of the road as is safe and practicable. Exceptions include passing, turning left, biking at the speed of other traffic and avoiding hazards. Hugging the side of the road is not practical because of curbs, pavement cracks, debris, broken-glass, storm grates and drop offs from the pavement. A bicyclist may ride away from the roadway edge if there is not enough room within the lane for a car to pass safely. Riding that blocks traffic for no good reason (any of these exceptions) is not sharing the road. Riding on the sidewalk can actually be less safe if there are many intersections and driveways where drivers may not see them. In some communities, adult bicyclists are not permitted to ride on sidewalks. Small children learning to ride should be on sidewalks with supervision until they are capable of riding in the street and can follow the rules of the road.

5. True or False:

Bicyclists have no legal right to ride on the road, and they follow different traffic rules.

Answer: False, State law permits bicyclists to use the road and requires bicyclists to follow all the rules applicable to drivers.

6. True or False:

Bicyclists should use only designated bike lanes and bike paths.

Answer: False, Bicyclists who ride to school, commute to work or do errands cannot always reach their destinations if restricted to bike lanes and bike paths. They must use streets to get where they are going. Even when there is a bike path right alongside the road, bicyclists are allowed (except in a few

towns) to ride on the road. Many bicyclists will choose to do so to avoid intersection safety problems or if the bike path is in bad condition.

7. At a stop sign before proceeding, a driver should:

- A. Look for cars coming from the left, right and straight ahead.
- B. Look for pedestrians on sidewalks.
- C. Look for bicyclists approaching on the road and the sidewalk.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D, All of the above. Before safely proceeding into an intersection from a stop sign, a driver must be alert to all traffic – cars, bicyclists and pedestrians. Some drivers check only the streets for oncoming cars and fail to check sidewalks for bicyclists and pedestrians. Drivers should stop at stop lines, not in (or past) crosswalks.

8. A driver should be alert to:

- A. A bicyclist riding into the street from a driveway or side street.
- B. A bicyclist riding alongside parked cars.
- C. A bicyclist riding against the traffic flow.
- D. All of the above.

Answer: D, All of the above. Driving requires being alert at all times, not just at intersections. A major cause of car-bicycle collisions is a bicyclist riding into the street from a residential or commercial driveway or a side street without looking for traffic. A bicyclist riding too close to a line of parked cars may move away from the cars and farther into the lane to avoid being hit by an opening car door. Although safety experts and the law say bicyclists should not ride against the traffic, some still do. A driver should be aware of all these situations.

9. All of these are driver errors except:

- A. Opening the door into the path of a bicyclist, after parking on-road.
- B. Passing a bicyclist and then immediately turning right, into the path of the cyclist.
- C. When turning left, misjudging an oncoming bicyclist's speed and cutting him off.
- D. Being unable to safely pass three bicyclists riding side-by-side.

Answer: D, On narrow roads, drivers may have to be patient and wait awhile to pass, instead of risking a dangerous collision. Drivers who have just parallel parked on the road must look back for bicyclists before opening the car door. Bicyclists' speeds vary widely, and judging speed is key when drivers prepare to turn left or right near bicycles. When in doubt, drivers should wait a few extra seconds and allow the cyclist to proceed, to prevent cutting off a cyclist. It is Pennsylvania Law that bicyclists are only allowed to ride up to two cyclists abreast (side-by-side).

10. True or False:

Because cars and trucks are larger than bicycles, drivers always have the right of way when bicyclists are on the road.

Answer: False, Drivers and bicyclists share the road equally. Both should take their turns according to standard right-of-way rules. These rules apply to all vehicles, bicycles included.