

Some Rules of the Road for Bicyclists and Motorists

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With summer upon us, school's out – and more bicyclists will be on the road and our wonderful local trails than ever. Here are some rules of the road to keep in mind so we can all have a safer and happier summer.

Bicyclists, make sure you are wearing a helmet and wear bright clothes so drivers can see you more easily, especially when it gets dark.

Motorists, be extra alert and don't drive distracted. Look in all directions when crossing bike trails or sidewalks and slow down when rounding a corner or cresting a hill.

Here are some additional safety tips for bicyclists from the League of Michigan Bicyclists (LMB), all required by law:

- Ride with the flow of traffic.
Often motorists don't check for traffic coming in unexpected directions.
- Obey traffic signals and signs.
Blowing through a red light is a recipe for disaster.
- Signal your intentions.
Why aggravate and confuse others?
- Ride as far to the right side of the roadway as "practicable" with a maximum of two abreast.
Where it's safe to do so, riding to the right is more "friendly."

Bicycles are allowed by law to ride on the roads; they are like any other slow-moving vehicle, such as letter carriers and farm equipment, but much more vulnerable. You can help create a more bike-friendly community through a little extra courtesy. An angry beep may startle a bicyclist into losing control, a dangerous situation for all.

According to the LMB, some common mistakes motorists make are:

- Failure to pass a bicyclist safely.
Bicyclists need at least 3-5 feet of space to be safe.
- Turning right into the path of a bicyclist who is going straight.
When turning right at intersections or into driveways, make sure no bicyclists are in your path.
- Failure to yield when making a left turn in front of a bicyclist.
Motorists must yield to oncoming traffic, including non-motorists.
- Opening a door into bicyclist's path.
Please check before opening doors.
- Parking in bike lanes.
Parking in a bike lane may seem convenient at the time, but can force bicyclists to swerve into the roadway.

Unfortunately, too few bicyclists have been trained to use the roads properly by our excellent local clubs and teams. Too many ride in the wrong direction, don't use helmets and wear dark clothing at night. Some people using bicycles do so as their only form of transportation and may lack the resources for bike safety gear. Yet we can all share the roads more safely, with a little extra caution.

For more information on bike safety see www.lmb.org. For information for local opportunities on learning how to ride safely (including information on our great local bike routes and trails) see www.bikefriendlykalamazoo.org.