

Chapter 4 - Sharing The Road

Sharing The Road With Motorcycles

Some things you should know when sharing the road with motorcycles:

- Motorcycles are often overlooked by motorists.
- It is not always easy to judge the speed or distance of a motorcycle.
- On residential streets, especially those with parked cars, travel at or below the speed limit, depending on sight distance.
- Motorcyclists change speed and lane position when encountering bad road conditions, such as manhole covers, diagonal railroad tracks, road debris, or in strong winds. Be ready to react.
- You should not share a lane with a motorcycle. The motorcyclist needs the entire lane for safety reasons.
- When you are passing, give motorcycles a full lane width. Do not squeeze past these road users. Wait for a clear stretch of road before passing a cyclist in a lane too narrow to share.

Safety Tips for Motorcycle Riders

- The law requires you to wear a helmet. Wearing a safety-certified helmet can prevent serious head injuries or death.
- Be sure your motorcycle is in safe condition and has all the equipment required by law.
- Make sure motorists see you. Wear bright colored clothes and stay out of a vehicle's blind spots. Use proper lights and reflectors when riding after dark.
- Make sure you signal before you slow down, change lanes or turn. Before merging, changing lanes, or turning, scan behind and in front to ensure that it is safe to make this maneuver. Do so in plenty of time and in cooperation with other drivers who will be affected by your move. If it is not safe, continue on a straight course and scan repeatedly. Only move once it is safe.
- Be careful when passing to the left of a parked or moving vehicle. You should leave three to four feet of clearance to avoid suddenly opened car doors or to allow for a vehicle to swerve.
- Be extra careful at intersections. Do not assume your right-of-way when there is a vehicle approaching. Be aware that motor vehicle drivers may not see you approaching the intersection, or may believe that you are moving at a slower speed than you are.
- Keep a steady line and be predictable as a courtesy to other traffic and to increase your personal safety.

Motorcycle Drivers Need a Driver License

To drive any motorcycle on the public streets, you must have a valid driver license with a motorcycle endorsement or a motorcycle license.

Sharing The Road With Large Trucks

Trucks are not large cars. Whether they are accelerating, braking, climbing a hill, switching lanes, or turning onto a side street, tractor-trailer trucks must perform certain maneuvers that drivers of automobiles do not.

A typical tractor-trailer combination, a power unit pulling a loaded semi-trailer hinged to its rear end, may weigh up to 80,000 pounds. Depending on the trailer length, the total length of the combination may exceed 90 feet. On the busiest intercity routes, a motorist may encounter double or even triple-trailer combinations sometimes exceeding 100 feet in length.

Any motorist who has driven behind one of these trucks at a traffic light knows that a semi-trailer combination accelerates slowly. The truck may have to go through ten gears to reach the speed limit. The truck may have two- or three-times more power under the hood than a car does, but with up to 70,000 pounds of trailer and cargo behind it, a truck engine must move 30 or 40 times more weight than a car engine. (Published with permission from John Deere Transportation Services, *Sharing the Road*, Deere & Co., 1996.)

To improve safety for all road users, please consider this information.

- Do not enter a roadway in front of a large vehicle. Avoid changing lanes in front of a large vehicle if you are turning off the roadway.
- If you are driving behind a truck or a bus and cannot see the driver in his or her rearview mirrors, the driver of that vehicle cannot see you.
- A truck or bus has blind spots on each side, in the rear and in the front where an automobile cannot be seen. These blind spots are referred to as the “**No-Zone**.” Do not drive in the **No-Zone** except when absolutely necessary. You should not drive alongside large vehicles for prolonged periods at any time. Tailgating a truck is also dangerous. Leave any large vehicle a cushion of safety.



- It takes longer to pass a truck. After you pass, make sure you can see the cab of the truck in your rearview mirror before reentering the lane. Maintain your speed and signal when reentering the lane. Do not slow down once you are in front of the truck.
- When traveling up or down steep grades, large vehicles must drive slowly in the right lane. Avoid driving your car in the right lane going up or down hills on divided or multi-lane roadways when interacting with large trucks. When you are near truck weigh stations, avoid driving in the right lane so slow-moving trucks can easily merge back onto the roadway.
- Vehicles carrying hazardous materials must stop at all railroad crossings. Be prepared.
- Because of their size, large trucks may swing out to the left as the first step in making a right turn. When following a tractor-trailer, observe its turn signals before trying to pass.
- Tractor-trailers take longer to stop than cars traveling at the same speed. The average passenger car traveling at 55 mph can stop in about 130 feet, almost half the length of a football field. A fully loaded tractor-trailer may take almost 400 feet to come to a complete stop.
- Cutting off a truck in traffic or on the highway is particularly dangerous. If you need to make a turn or lane change, take a moment to slow down and turn behind the truck—it will only take you a few extra seconds.

- Never underestimate the size and speed of an approaching tractor-trailer. Because of its large size, a tractor-trailer often appears to be traveling more slowly than its actual speed. Car-truck collisions can occur at intersections when the driver of the car does not realize how close the truck is or how quickly it is approaching.

Sharing The Road With Pedestrians

As soon as you step out of your vehicle, you become a pedestrian. As a pedestrian, you should know your rights and responsibilities, and as a driver you should know the law when pedestrians are around.

As a pedestrian, you should know . . .

When you are facing a “Walk” signal or a green light, you have the right-of-way. You may begin to cross the road after you make sure all drivers see you and stop for you.



Do not begin to cross the street when you are facing a “Don’t Walk” signal or a red or yellow light. If the flashing “Don’t Walk” sign appears when you are crossing the street, you may finish crossing the street.



You should cross the road at an intersection or a crosswalk when:

- You are in a business district.
- You are between two closely spaced intersections with traffic lights.

Otherwise, you may cross the road in the middle of the block without a crosswalk being careful when stepping out between two parked vehicles. You must yield the right-of-way to all traffic when crossing in the middle of a block. Walk facing traffic when no sidewalk is available.

You should not stand in a traffic lane to speak to a driver for any length of time, as this could cause an crash. Instead, you should wait for the driver to pull over to a safe parking spot, and you should remain on the curb side of the vehicle.

As a Driver, You Should Know . . .

In some situations, pedestrians are required by law to yield to vehicles. In other situations, vehicles are required to yield to pedestrians. In all situations, whether the pedestrians are obeying the law or not, you must drive carefully, reduce your speed if needed, and do your best to avoid endangering pedestrians.

Even when you are facing a green light you must yield the right-of-way to all pedestrians in the intersection. Never assume you have the right-of-way. Do not assume pedestrians see you and will stop for you.

Do not pass a vehicle that has stopped or slowed down for a pedestrian.

Watch out for kids. Children will run out into the road without looking for traffic. So, be extra careful when you drive near schools, playgrounds, parks, or in residential areas. You must obey a slower speed limit in a school zone when lights are flashing or children are present. At a school crossing where there is a traffic patrol, stop and yield if a traffic patrol member signals you to do so.

The following laws or rules also apply:

- Drivers must always yield the right-of-way to persons who are blind. When a pedestrian is crossing a street or highway guided by a dog or carrying a white cane (or a white cane with a red tip), vehicles must come to a complete stop.
- Drivers must yield when a pedestrian is in a marked or unmarked crosswalk on or approaching their side of the road.
- As you prepare for a right turn, especially on a red traffic signal, be cautious of pedestrians (or bicyclists) approaching on your right.
- Drivers should not block the crosswalk when stopped at a red traffic signal. Drivers should not cross a sidewalk or crosswalk without first yielding to pedestrians

Sharing the Road with Mopeds and Bicycles

Some things you should know when sharing the road with mopeds or bicycles: Most collisions with bicycles and mopeds happen at intersections, where smaller, slower bicycles and mopeds are especially easy to overlook. Scan carefully for bicycles and mopeds before proceeding through an intersection, giving them the same consideration you would any other vehicle.

- Bicycles are often overlooked by motorists.
- It is not always easy to judge the speed or distance of a bicycle.
- Crashes with wrong-way bicyclists frequently occur when a motorist wants to turn right onto a main road and is only looking left for approaching traffic. Be sure to look right and check for wrong-way bicyclists on the road or sidewalk before proceeding.
- On residential streets, especially those with parked cars, travel at or below the speed limit.
- If you are following a bicyclist and need to make a right turn, slow down and remain behind the cyclist until you are able to turn.
- Cyclists often travel at surprisingly fast speeds. If you need to make a left turn, yield to oncoming bicyclists unless you are absolutely sure you can make the turn before the cyclist reaches the intersection.
- Bicyclists change speed and lane position when encountering bad road conditions, such as manhole covers, diagonal railroad tracks, drain grates, road debris, or in strong winds. Be ready to react.
- When you are passing, give bicycles and mopeds a full lane width. Do not squeeze past these road users. The bicycle is generally a slow moving vehicle and this may require you to slow down. Wait for a clear stretch of road before passing a cyclist in a lane too narrow to share.
- Check for passing bicyclists before opening your car door into a traffic lane or bicycle lane.
- A bicycle lane is a portion of a roadway designated by striping to be used by bicycles. You may cross a bicycle lane when turning or when entering or leaving the roadway. You must yield to bicyclists in a bicycle lane.

Where to Ride Mopeds and Bicycles

On public streets and highways, you have the same rights and responsibilities as a motor vehicle operator. Always ride with traffic, never against it. When operating at less than the posted speed or traffic flow, generally ride as

near to the right side of the roadway as is safe. The right edge of the road often has hazards like ditches, gutters, sand, and gravel shoulders. Leave space between yourself and these hazards as needed for safety.

You may move more toward the middle or left of the lane or roadway, as appropriate when:

- Making a left turn;
- Avoiding hazards;
- The lane is too narrow to share with another vehicle; or
- There is a right-turn-only lane and you are going straight.

Always check traffic, and signal before changing lanes or changing your position within a lane. On a one-way street, bicyclists may also choose to ride as far left as is safe.

The law does not allow you to ride a moped on any part of the federal interstate highway system.

Safety Tips for Moped and Bicycle Riders

- State law does not require you to wear a helmet. However, wearing a safety-certified helmet can prevent serious head injuries or death.
- Be sure your bike is in safe condition and has all the equipment required by law.
- Make sure motorists see you. Wear bright colored clothes and stay out of a vehicle's blind spots. Use proper lights and reflectors when riding after dark.
- Make sure you signal before you slow down, change lanes, or turn. Before merging, changing lanes, or turning, scan behind and in front to ensure that it is safe to make this maneuver. Do so in plenty of time and in cooperation with other drivers who will be affected by your move. If it is not safe, continue on a straight course and scan repeatedly and only move once it is safe. In conditions of heavy traffic, less proficient bicyclists may find it easier to wait near the curb for a safe gap to appear.
- Be careful when passing to the left of a parked or moving vehicle. You should leave three to four feet of clearance to avoid suddenly-opened car doors or to allow for a vehicle to swerve.
- Be extra careful at intersections. Do not assume your right-of-way when there is a vehicle approaching. Be aware that motor vehicle drivers may not see you approaching the intersection, or may believe that you are moving at a slower speed than you are.
- Keep a steady line, and be predictable as a courtesy to other traffic and to increase your personal safety.
- For teen and adult bicyclists, studies show that riding on the street with traffic, not against it (following the same traffic rules that other vehicles do), is far safer than riding on the sidewalk.

Moped Drivers Need a Driver License

To drive any motorized bicycle such as a moped on the public streets, you must have a valid driver license. A motorized bicycle is defined as any two-wheeled or three-wheeled device having an automatic transmission and a motor with a cylinder capacity of not more than 50 cubic centimeters, which produces less than three gross brake horsepower, and is capable of

propelling the device at a maximum speed of not more than 30 miles per hour on level ground.

Equipment Required on Mopeds and Bicycles

You do not have to register your moped or bicycle and it does not have to be inspected. However, Missouri law requires certain equipment on mopeds and bicycles.

Brakes — Your brakes must be able to stop you within 25 feet when traveling ten mph.

Lights and Reflectors — The number of bicycle-auto crashes rises dramatically between sunset and sunrise. Almost all such crashes can be prevented with proper bicycle lights and reflectors. You must have the following lights and reflectors when riding your bicycle from ½ hour after sunset until ½ hour before sunrise:

- A **White Light** on the front of your bicycle or carried by you that other drivers can see from 500 feet.
- A **Rear Red Reflector**, at least two square inches, or a **Rear Red Light** that drivers can see when reflected by their vehicles' low beam headlights at 600 feet.
- **Reflective Material or Lights** on the pedals, crank arms, shoes, or lower legs that drivers can see when reflected by their vehicles' low beam headlights at 200 feet.
- **Reflective Material and/or Lights on Each Side of the Bicycle** or bicyclist that drivers can see when reflected by their vehicles' low beam headlights at 300 feet. This does not apply to mopeds that comply with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Regulations.

Sharing the Road with Electric Bicycles

An electric bicycle as defined in **301.010 RSMo** is a bicycle equipped with fully operable pedals, a saddle or seat for the rider, and an electric motor of less than 750 watts that meets the requirements of one of the three classes:

- Class 1: Bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that cease to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of twenty miles per hour.
- Class 2: Bicycle equipped with a motor used exclusively to propel the bicycle and that is not capable of providing assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of twenty miles per hour.
- Class 3: Bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of twenty-eight miles per hour.

Operation of an electric bicycle as defined by 301.010 RSMo does not require the rider to hold an operator license or motorcycle license.

Funeral Processions

If you are driving a vehicle in a funeral procession, you should follow the vehicle in front of you as closely as is practical and safe. Every vehicle in the procession must use its flashing emergency lights. An organized funeral procession has the right-of-way at all intersections regardless of any traffic control device, except for emergency vehicles or when directed otherwise by law enforcement officials.

The following rules apply to all drivers not involved in an organized funeral procession.

- Do not drive between the vehicles that are part of the procession when they are in motion.
- Do not join a funeral procession for the purpose of obtaining the right-of-way.
- Do not attempt to pass any vehicle in the procession except where a passing lane has been specifically provided.
- Do not enter an intersection in which a procession is going through a red signal light, unless you may do so without crossing the path of the funeral procession.

Road Rage

Road rage is an uncontrolled display of anger by the operator of a motor vehicle (usually in response to another driver's actions), which can result in property damage or personal injury.

Drivers prone to road rage are usually aggressive individuals who fail to follow courteous driving practices. Some examples of behavior associated with road rage include:

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| – Beeping the horn | – Pursuing another vehicle |
| – Flashing the headlights | – Making aggressive gestures |
| – Forcing another vehicle to pull over | – Verbally abusing another driver |
| – Bumping into another vehicle | – Tailgating another vehicle |
| – Threatening another driver | – Braking or slowing suddenly |
| – Damaging a vehicle intentionally | – Deliberate obstruction |
| – Assaulting another driver | – “Cutting off” or swerving |

As our society has become more accustomed to it, road rage has become a “normal” part of our driving environment. These habits can be unlearned, but it takes self discipline on the part of drivers.

When confronted with any of the behaviors associated with road rage, you should try to . . .

- Remain calm and do not react with similar behavior.
- Identify the location (for example: intersection, mile marker, direction the vehicle was traveling, etc.).
- Get a physical description of the driver.
- Get a description of the vehicle (approximate year, make, model, color, license plate number, etc.).
- Report the incident to the nearest local authorities as soon as possible.
- If you have a cellular phone, exit the roadway to a safe area and dial *55 (or 911 if you are in a metropolitan area).

Drunk Drivers

If you believe you have seen a drunk driver, tell the police immediately. You may be saving someone's life. Helpful information to provide the officer includes the license plate number of the vehicle, a physical description of the car and driver, and the vehicle's location.

About Littering

Littering is against the law. It is unsightly and may cause a traffic crash. For example, a lit cigarette thrown out a car window can be blown into the vehicle behind you, causing property damage or personal injury.

If a judge finds you guilty of littering, you may have to pay up to a \$1,000 fine and/or spend up to one year in jail.