

Bicycle Laws of North Carolina



In North Carolina, the bicycle has the legal status of a vehicle. Bicyclists have full rights and responsibilities on the roadway and are subject to the regulations of a motor vehicle.

North Carolina law requires bicyclists to:

- ◆ Ride on the right in the same direction as other traffic going in the same direction of your destination (this includes left-hand turning lanes).
- ◆ Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- ◆ Use hand signals to communicate intended movements (left and right turns and stopping).
- ◆ Equip bicycles with a front lamp visible from 300 feet and a rear reflector visible from 200 feet when riding at night.
- ◆ Yield to pedestrians if they are crossing a crosswalk or regular pedestrian crossing.
- ◆ Wear a bicycle helmet if you're under 16. Child passengers under 40 pounds or 40 inches must be seated and secured in a child seat or bicycle trailer.

Safety Tips for Motorists



- ◆ Do not honk at a cyclist; this can startle and cause them to swerve.
- ◆ Drivers turning left in front of oncoming cyclists cause a large percentage of car/cycle accidents.
- ◆ Overtaking a cyclist, and then making a right turn, is also a cause of many accidents.
- ◆ Although most bicyclists stay to the right, North Carolina law states that bicycles are permitted to use as much of the lane as they wish.
- ◆ Be alert around cyclists and watch for hand signals.

Safety Tips for Bicyclists



- ◆ Always wear bright clothing to make yourself more visible day and night.
- ◆ Use a bell or horn or other audible device to warn pedestrians as you approach them.
- ◆ Ride predictably where you will be seen—do not ride so far to the right that you are not in the motorist's normal scanning area.
- ◆ Right-turning motorists may turn just after overtaking a cyclist—avoid blind spots.
- ◆ Make eye contact when approaching a motorist positioned for a left turn ahead of you.
- ◆ Wear a helmet—"ANSI Approved" or "Snell Approved" helmets have been crash tested and are identified by a sticker.
- ◆ When making a left turn, merge with motor vehicle traffic well in advance of the intersection.
- ◆ When bicycle paths merge with motor vehicle traffic use extra caution and merge in a predictable fashion.
- ◆ Allow additional stopping distance in inclement weather.
- ◆ Use a backpack or bike bag to carry items.

Reasons to Bike



- ◆ Cycling reduces traffic and parking pressures in downtown areas.
- ◆ Cycling is a less expensive alternative to rising prices of gas, automobiles, and parking.
- ◆ Cycling is a great form of exercise, which in turn promotes numerous health benefits.
- ◆ Cycling helps reduce air, water, and noise pollution, promoting environmental preservation.

For more information...

For more information on how bicycling can improve your health and the environment, visit the following organizations' websites:

Chicagoland Bicycle Federation

www.chibikefed.org/power.html

This website will calculate how many calories and pounds of fat you burn while cycling and the amount of toxic emissions you save by riding a bicycle instead of driving.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

www.bicyclinginfo.org/

This website provides reasons to bicycle and information on how to do it safely.

The Weiss Urban Livability Fellows

This pamphlet was produced and distributed by the Weiss Urban Livability Fellows, an interdisciplinary group of graduate students at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill that studies issues of urban livability.

For more information on the Weiss Program, visit our website:
<http://gradschool.unc.edu/interdisciplinary.html>

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