An illustration of a city street scene. In the foreground, a man in a blue and white cycling jersey and a black helmet is riding a bicycle towards the viewer. Behind him, another cyclist is visible. In the background, there are several cars, including a white sedan and a red car. A traffic light is visible, showing a green light. To the right of the traffic light is a 'no right turn' sign. The background features tall buildings and trees. The title 'ILLINOIS BICYCLE RULES OF THE ROAD' is written in large, bold, yellow letters across the top half of the image.

ILLINOIS BICYCLE RULES OF THE ROAD

A faint, light-colored map of the state of Illinois is visible in the background, positioned behind the text of the Secretary of State's name.

Jesse White
Secretary of State



Bicycle riding is a great way to get into shape and have fun. To remain safe on Illinois roads, it is important to follow the same traffic safety laws that govern vehicle drivers.

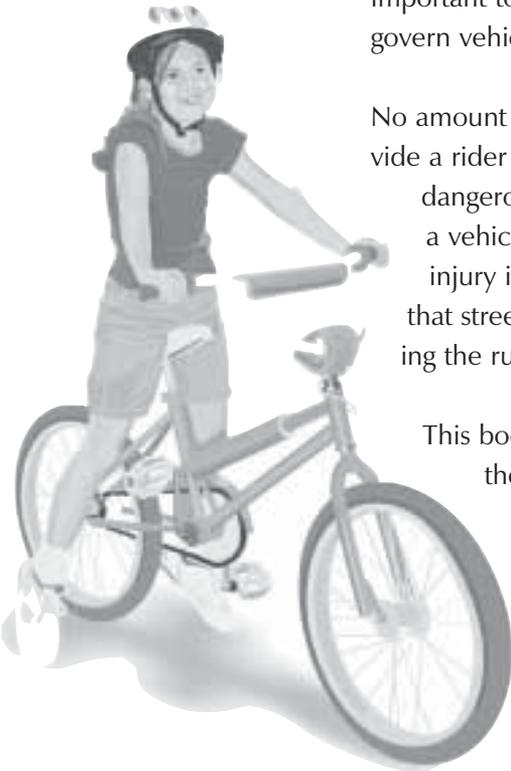
No amount of bicycle safety equipment can provide a rider with adequate protection from the dangerous force of a car or truck if involved in a vehicle collision. The best way to avoid injury is by being prepared for the dangers that streets pose to bicycle riders and by obeying the rules of the road.

This booklet provides bicyclists and pedestrians the information needed to stay safe while sharing the road with motorists.

Learning and practicing the bicycle rules of the road is your responsibility. The short time it takes to read this booklet and practice what you have learned can provide you a lifetime of safe bicycle riding.

Jesse White

Jesse White
Secretary of State



Preparing to Ride

HELMETS

Bicycle helmets are an essential element of bicycle safety. Always strap on an approved safety helmet before you ride to protect your head and brain from injury in case of an accident.

BICYCLE SAFETY CHECK

Does your bicycle have the following equipment?

| | YES | NO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Front light visible for at least 500 feet? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Clear front reflector? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Red rear reflector visible from 100 to 600 feet? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Horn or bell that can be heard up to 100 feet? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reliable, properly adjusted brakes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wheel-mounted side reflectors? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reflector pedals? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gears that are adjusted and operate smoothly? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Properly adjusted seat? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Handlebars and all accessories securely attached? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Use this space to list any repairs needed to make your bicycle safe:

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents should be aware of the responsibilities they must assume when their children ride or walk near streets or highways. These responsibilities range from the selection of proper equipment for the child to seeing that the child learns and obeys all traffic laws. For the safety of your child and others, make bicycle safety one of your priorities.

Bicycle Safety Tips



It is safest to ride single file. Never ride more than two next to each other. Never hang on to another vehicle while riding your bike. It is dangerous and against the law. You could be seriously injured.

Always ride one to a bike. Your bike is harder to balance with another person on it, and a passenger may block your view of what is around you.



Avoid riding at night if possible. If you ride in the dark, the law says your bike must have a front light that is visible from a distance of at least 500 feet and a rear red reflector that can be seen for up to 600 feet. If you must ride at night, always wear white or reflective clothing.

Make sure your bike is equipped for safety and working properly. Every bike should have the required reflectors. Check the brakes often to see that they are working. The seat and handlebars should be securely attached and properly adjusted. Wearing a helmet may prevent you from being seriously injured in an accident.



Ride as close to the right edge of the road as practical. Always ride in the same direction as the other traffic. Certain conditions allow a bicyclist to move farther to the left, such as broken glass, drain grates, parked cars, left turns and passing.



Always keep both hands on the handlebars. Use a backpack or a bike carrier to hold your books, lunch or other items. Ride more slowly on wet streets, loose gravel or bumpy roads. Always slow down at an intersection or railroad crossing.

Sign Language

Traffic signs and signals “talk” to vehicles in the street. They tell drivers when to stop and when to go. They warn of railroad crossings and other hazards and tell you where you may ride your bike. Bicycle riders, as well as drivers, must obey all traffic signs and signals.



Traffic Light

Stop at a red light.

A yellow light is a warning that the light is about to turn red. Prepare to stop.

You may go on a green light, but look carefully to see if it is safe to go *first*.



Flashing Red Light

Stop. Look left, then right, then left again. Proceed when safe to do so.



Flashing Yellow Light

Slow down and ride carefully.



Stop

Come to a complete stop.



Yield

Slow down and let other vehicles or pedestrians go before you.



One Way

Traffic may go only one way on this street. Ride in the direction the arrow points.



Wrong Way

This sign tells you that you are riding in the wrong direction on a street.



No Bikes

Bicycles are not allowed on streets where this sign appears.



Bike Traffic

This sign alerts other drivers that there is bike traffic on a street.



Pedestrian Crosswalk

Near a crosswalk, always watch both sides of the street for pedestrians.



School Crossing

At a school crossing, you must let pedestrians go first.



Railroad Crossing

Stop. Look for flashing lights and listen for the train whistle. Never ride through, around or under any crossing gate.



Road Construction

Watch for bumpy roads and large equipment.

Traffic Language

Motor vehicles and trucks use their horns and signal lights to “talk” to each other. The loud honk of a horn may mean “watch out!” A car’s brake lights tell the driver behind that the car is slowing or stopping.

To ride safely in traffic, bicycle riders use their hands and arms to “talk” to the vehicles around them. There are three important arm signals you should learn and use every time you prepare to turn or stop. Remember to signal, using your left arm, about one-third of a block before you plan to turn so that vehicles behind you will have time to slow down.



RIGHT TURNS — Right turns must be made from the right lane. Stay as close as practical to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway.

LEFT TURN — When making a left turn, bicyclists have two choices. The first is to make the turn as a car would. When a left-hand lane exists, the bicyclist should occupy the right-hand side of that lane and then, after entering the intersection, look in all directions and make the turn when safe.

The second choice is to stay as close as practical to the right curb or edge of the roadway. After proceeding across the intersecting roadway to the far corner of the curb or intersection of the roadway edges, the bicyclist must wait out of the way of traffic. After obeying any official traffic control device, the bicyclist may complete the turn in the new direction.

Your eyes are an important safety tool when riding your bike. Watch other drivers closely to make sure they have seen you and your arm signal.

Pavement Markings

In many cases, pavement markings are used to warn and direct drivers and bicycle riders and to regulate traffic.



White Stop Line — Shows you where you must stop for a traffic light or stop sign.

Pedestrian Crosswalks — Many intersections have white lines that show pedestrian crosswalks. Watch for people walking between these lines. They have the right-of-way.

Center Lines — A double yellow center stripe means do not cross the stripe (except to turn out of or into a driveway or alley). The double line indicates there is more than one lane of traffic moving in both directions. White dashes mark the lane separations on either side of the double yellow stripe. You should ride on the right side of the right lane, except to pass or to make a left turn. Where there is only one lane for traffic in each direction and passing is permitted, the center of the street is marked with a broken yellow stripe.

Directions and Arrows — Some busy streets have lanes with individual directions painted on them, such as "left only" or "right only," or an arrow pointing straight ahead. You must follow the directions of the arrows painted on those lanes.

Approaching School Buses

Cyclists who come upon a school bus with flashing signal lights and a "STOP" swing-arm out must give the stop hand signal and come to a complete stop. They may proceed when the "STOP" swing-arm retracts and the flashing signals stop.



Obey the Laws

You, as well as others who use public roads, must obey the traffic laws so that everyone can get to their destinations safely. Ride your bicycle as a car should be driven. Obey the laws so that everyone can enjoy healthy and safe cycling.

Riding on Sidewalks and Parking

When walking or riding your bicycle on a sidewalk or on or along a crosswalk, you must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and give an audible signal before overtaking and passing them. You must operate as a pedestrian. Watch for signs that prohibit riding bicycles on sidewalks and crosswalks.

If parking is allowed on a sidewalk, park your bicycle so it will not be in the way of pedestrians. Bicycles may be parked on the road at any angle to the curb or edge of the roadway where parking is allowed, and they may be parked on the roadway next to each other near the side of the road.

Right-of-Way Laws

Right-of-way means that one person has the right to go ahead of another. This applies to bicycle riders, motorists and pedestrians. If others do not follow the rules, let them have the right-of-way to avoid the risk of an accident.

Two-Way Intersections — When you come to a stop sign at a two-way stop intersection, remember that the traffic on the cross street has the right-of-way. You must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and vehicles on the cross street before you go ahead.

Four-Way Intersections — At a four-way stop intersection, the driver or bicycle rider who arrives first at the intersection should be the first one to go. After making a complete stop, proceed only when it is safe to do so. Drivers and bicycle riders are expected to take their turns and go one by one through the intersection after coming to a complete stop.

Unmarked Intersections — At an unmarked intersection or crossing where there are no traffic signs or signals, the driver or bicycle rider on the left must yield to those on the right. When driving out of an alley or driveway, you must stop and yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and vehicles before you cross the sidewalk or enter the street.

Emergency Vehicles — Emergency vehicles operating with their lights flashing and siren sounding always have the right-of-way. The law requires that you pull over to the side of the road and stop if necessary.

Disabled Persons — Blind, hearing impaired or physically disabled persons can be identified by their white canes, support or guide dogs. You must always yield the right-of-way to them.

Police — If a police officer directs otherwise, the right-of-way laws do not apply; riders and pedestrians must do as the officer tells them.

Bicycle Safety Quiz

- 1** **Always ride your bicycle:**
- on the opposite side of traffic.
 - in the middle of the road.
 - in the same direction as other traffic.
- 2** **Bicyclists have the same rights as persons driving a car.**
True or False?
- 3** **A person riding a bicycle must:**
- never use hand signals.
 - always use hand signals.
 - use hand signals only when he/she feels like it.
- 4** **A flashing red light means:**
- reduce speed.
 - stop.
 - caution.
- 5** **You should always stop in the middle of a crosswalk.**
True or False?
- 6** **When a school bus has its stop sign out:**
- a bicyclist can ignore it and go on by.
 - a bicyclist must give the stop hand signal and come to a complete stop.
 - a bicyclist can ride to the other side of the road and continue on his/her way.
- 7** **When crossing an intersection:**
- without looking, ride your bike or walk as fast as you can across it.
 - look left, right and left again, and cross when it is safe to do so.
 - stop in the middle of the intersection and make the cars stop for you.
- 8** **When cars and bicycles arrive at a four-way stop, who goes first?**
- Cars always go first.
 - Bicycles go first.
 - The one who arrives first goes first.
- 9** **It is permissible to make a right-hand turn on red:**
- when you have come to a complete stop and checked the intersection to make sure it is safe to go.
 - only if you are driving a car.
 - anytime you feel like it.
- 10** **You should ride your bicycle as a car should be driven.**
True or False?

(Answers on back page.)

Colors of Signs

The meanings of the eight basic colors of signs should be memorized. Knowing the colors will help you recognize all signs.



RED: Stop, yield, do not enter or wrong way



YELLOW: General warning



ORANGE: Work zone warning



BLACK: Regulatory



WHITE: Regulatory



BROWN: Public recreation areas and parks



BLUE: Motorist services guidance



GREEN: Distance, direction and information

Bicycle Safety Quiz Answers

1. **c** You should always ride in the same direction as the traffic and stay as close to the right edge of the roadway as practical.
2. **T** Bicyclists **DO** have the same rights and responsibilities on roadways that persons driving cars have.
3. **b** Many accidents can be avoided if hand signals are used properly. Hand signals let drivers know what you are going to do.
4. **b** You must always stop at a flashing red light.
5. **F** Crosswalks are designed to let people walk across an intersection and should never be obstructed by a car or other vehicles.
6. **b** Bicyclists must **always** signal and stop for a school bus and proceed when the stop arm is retracted and flashing signals stop.
7. **b** It is very important to check in all directions before crossing an intersection.
8. **c** At a four-way stop, drivers and bicycle riders are expected to take their turns and go one by one through the intersection.
9. **a** You may turn right in Illinois after making a complete stop and checking in all directions.
10. **T** You should obey all traffic laws, whether you are driving a car or riding a bicycle.

For more information about bicycle safety, please contact: Secretary of State, Driver Services Dept., Traffic Safety Division, 2701 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62723.