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Sharing the Road - Safely!

Bicyclists

- 4 *Wear a helmet*
- 4 *Ride on the right side of the road*
- 4 *Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks*
- 4 *If you must bike at night, lights are a must*
- 4 *Wear reflective clothing*

Pedestrians

- 4 *Walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic*
- 4 *Cross the street only in crosswalks*
- 4 *Wear reflective clothing*

Motorists

- 4 *Obey the speed limit*
- 4 *Allow plenty of time and space when passing cyclists*
- 4 *Don't travel or park in bike lanes*
- 4 *Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks*

For Everyone

- 4 *Be predictable; obey traffic laws*
- 4 *Make eye contact with others*
- 4 *Be alert for the unexpected*
- 4 *Don't wear headphones*
- 4 *Limit alcohol consumption*

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Selected Readings:

- = A Study of Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Accidents: Identification of Problem Types and Countermeasure Approaches by Kenneth D. Cross and Gary Fisher. 1977. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- = Pedestrian and Bicycle Crash Types of the Early 1990s by William W. Hunter, Jane C. Stutts, Wayne E. Pein, and Chante L. Cox. 1996. US Department of Transportation. FHWA-RD-95-163.



BICYCLING ON THE LEFT

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Exploring the Myth

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Despite what people say, they are never safer riding against traffic.

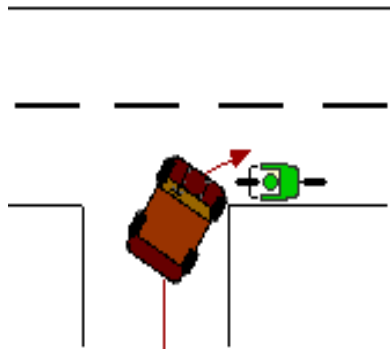
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For more information about bicycle safety education materials, contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office or the 4-H Program, Biological & Environmental Engineering Department, 326 Riley Robb Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853-5701. Website: www.bike.cornell.edu.

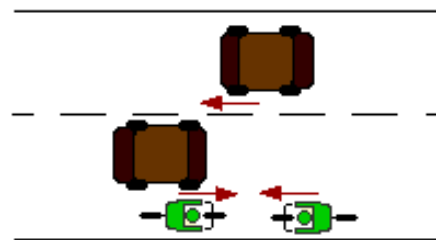
Bicycling on the left side of the street against traffic is one of the most dangerous violations a bicyclist can make. Yet, most people who ride that way actually believe they are safer facing traffic. These people have bought into the myth that their greatest danger is being struck from behind by a motorist. Some people who ride against traffic will tell you that they were taught as children to ride that way . . . as if they were pedestrians. But most people who ride against traffic know it is a violation of the law, and do it anyway. Some do it because they don't want to take the time to cross the street. Others do it because they believe the myth. Here are some facts to keep in mind:

- = Approximately 1/3 of all car-bike crashes involve wrong way cyclists.
- = By riding against traffic, the cyclist is approaching every intersection and driveway from an unexpected location. In doing so, they are outside of the motorist's normal searching pattern. The cyclist is essentially invisible.



- = Nearly all car-bike crashes occur at intersections and involve turning or crossing motorists.

- = About 90% of car-bike collisions are caused by conditions or actions in front of the cyclist.
- = Only 4% - 6% of all car-bike crashes involve a motorist striking a non-swerving cyclist from behind. These crashes rarely occur in the daytime. They occur most often at night when the cyclist is insufficiently illuminated and/or the motorist is intoxicated.
- = Stop signs and other traffic control devices are posted for traffic traveling on the right side of the street. By riding against traffic, cyclists may not see important regulatory signs which apply to them.
- = Cyclists riding against traffic endanger other bicyclists as well. Since there are no rules on how oncoming cyclists should pass one another, the threat of head-on collisions between cyclists is very real. Closing speeds at the time of collision can reach over 40 mph.



Riding on the right side of the roadway is the law in all fifty states!



Working with Children

Sometimes we unknowingly teach children, and unknowingly teach them incorrectly. Consider the situation where a parent is walking on the left-hand side of the roadway, accompanied by a young child just learning to bicycle.

Or, how about the child who wants to go just a short distance down the street to a friend's house, and in order to travel on the right-hand side, it would require crossing the street twice? The parent tells the child not to cross the street, and to ride on the left because it's only a short distance. Their first experiences of bicycling on the roadway teaches them that the left side is the correct side.

There is no blanket solution to the wide range of situations adults experience with children in traffic. There may be times when a bicycle is not an option, and the child must walk. Remember, though, that actions speak louder than words, and significantly influence a child's behavior. Take the time to teach children the proper bicycling skills and traffic concepts. Set a good example and take them for a bicycle ride; it's healthy in many ways. Stop along the way and talk about the various traffic situations, and impress upon them the necessity to bike right.