

# Don't Be A Road Warrior!



**Bicycle Safely**  
Our reputation is riding on you



*Office of the Governor  
NH Department Of Transportation  
NH Department Of Safety  
NH Highway Safety Agency*

## ***Bicycles are Vehicles***

According to New Hampshire law, bicyclists have the same rights and duties as drivers of motor vehicles. (RSA 265:143)

However, the reputation of all bicyclists is hampered by the few cyclists who ride outside the law. Riding by the same set of rules as motorists makes you predictable and greatly reduces your risk of a crash. Law-abiding actions send a message to motorists: "I belong here – and I'm going to share the road in a predictable, courteous way; just as I expect you to."

## ***Two Wheels or Four, The Law is the Same***

- Before entering the roadway, yield the right of way to approaching traffic. (RSA 265:32)
- A bicyclist traveling at less than normal traffic speed shall remain on the right side as far as possible except when unsafe to do so. (RSA 265:144-11)
- Stop and yield to cross traffic at a stop sign. (RSA 265:30-I)
- Don't cross the stop line when the traffic signal is red. (RSA 265-30-I)
- Stop for pedestrians in a crosswalk without traffic signals, and don't pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk. (RSA 265:35-I&IV)
- In preparing to turn left, do so from the farthest left lane available. (RSA 265:42) To prepare for the turn, first look behind and merge to the center line or left turn lane as traffic permits, signaling to get the cooperation of following drivers as necessary.
- Don't ride on sidewalks (RSA 265:26-a)
- Don't ride the wrong way on a one-way street (RSA 265:23-II)
- Any bicyclist shall stop upon demand of a peace officer and permit his bicycle to be inspected. (RSA 265:144-8)
- A bicyclist must wear at least one item of reflective apparel such as a reflective vest, jacket, or helmet from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise. (RSA 265:144-12)
- Always wear a well-fitted bike helmet – it can save your life!

*NH cities and towns have the power to make additional ordinances regulating cycling within their boundaries.*

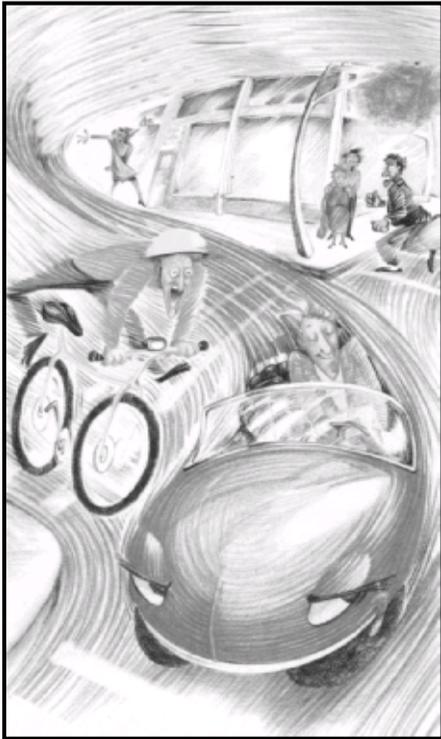
## ***Where to Ride on the Road***

- Ride on the right side of the road, with the flow of traffic. (RSA 265:16-II) Motorists and pedestrians do not look for bicyclists coming from the wrong direction. Riding against traffic is the single largest cause of collisions with cars.
- Look ahead for potholes, debris, and other obstacles. As soon as you see one, look behind and merge left, as traffic permits, well before you reach the obstacle.
- Do not ride so close to parked cars that opening doors may hit you. In an urban situation one may have to ride close to parked cars, look ahead through the cars' rear windows to look for drivers who may be about to open their doors.
- Do not pass on the right of cars turning right.
- Where there is space, leave enough room for faster traffic to pass. You may occupy any part of a lane when your safety warrants it. Never compromise your safety for the convenience of a motorist behind you. (RSA 265:23-II)

## ***Special Rules for Bicyclists***

- Persons riding bicycles two or more abreast shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic and, on laned roadway, shall ride within a single lane. (RSA 265:144-5)
- No bicycle shall be used to carry more persons at one time than the number for which it is designed and equipped. (RSA 265:144-2)
- No person operating a bicycle shall hitch onto a car or any other vehicle moving upon a way. (RSA 265:144-3)
- No person operating a bicycle shall carry any package, bundle or article which prevents the rider from keeping at least one hand on the handlebars. (RSA 265:144-4)
- No bicycle shall be operated unless the steering, brakes, tires, and other required equipment are all in safe condition. (RSA 265:144-9)
- Riders under the age of 16 must wear a helmet when operating a bicycle on a public way. (RSA 265:144-10)
- When bicycling after dark you must use a white front headlight and a red rear light or rear reflector visible for 300 feet. (RSA 266:86)

# ***Don't Be A Road Hog!***



**Share the Road**  
Bicycles are vehicles too!



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## ***Bicycles are Vehicles and Belong on the Road***

According to New Hampshire law, bicyclists have the same rights and duties as drivers of motor vehicles. (RSA 265:143)\*

Bicyclists may pass a slower moving vehicle in the same lane if safe to do so. Passing on the right is allowed if the motor vehicle is stopped. (RSA 265:144-7)

Expect bicyclist to use designated turn lanes and to move away from the right edge of the road to avoid hazards including other vehicles, pedestrians, debris, and opening doors of parked vehicles. (RSA 265:144-11)

Respecting the rights of all users of the road goes a long way toward avoiding crashes. Some bicyclists ignore the rules. That doesn't mean you should imitate their behavior!

### ***You Can Prevent Crashes***

Most crashes involving bicyclists and motorists occur at intersections. This often happens when a motorist pulls out from a stop sign or driveway without yielding, or turns across the bicyclist's path.

- When turning right, make your turn from the right edge of the road. (RSA 265:42) Before turning, slow and merge behind a bicyclist ahead of you.
- When turning left, yield to on-coming bicyclists or any other vehicle, even those at the far side of the road. (RSA 265:29). Don't underestimate the speed of a bicyclist.
- A stop sign means you must stop and wait until no traffic, whether bicycle or car, is close enough to be a danger. (RSA 265:30-I)
- A yield sign means you must wait for traffic, cyclists included. (RSA 265:31) This may require you to stop.
- Signal well in advance of turns (at least 100 feet), so that bicyclists and other vehicles know your intentions. (RSA 265:45-II). You may not turn or move across the road unless it can be done safely. (RSA 265:45-I)
- When getting out of a car, check for approaching bicyclists before opening the door. (RSA 265:96)

For more information or to access an electronic copy of this flyer visit our site at:  
[www.nh.gov/dot/nhbikeped](http://www.nh.gov/dot/nhbikeped)

### ***Make Room for Bicyclists***

You may overtake only if it is safe to do so (RSA 265:18) Change lanes to pass if you can't pass safely in the same lane. Leave plenty of room and pass at a safe speed. Do not cross the center line if you can't see the road a sufficient distance to know that there are no oncoming vehicles. (RSA 265:20) You are responsible for using due care to avoid colliding with a bicyclist. (RSA 265:37) Don't take unnecessary risks for the sake of convenience.

When passing a bicycle, leave a reasonable and prudent distance. That should be at least 3 feet when the vehicle is traveling at 30 miles per hour or less and one extra foot for every 10 MPH over 30. (RSA 265:143-a).

If you think a bicyclist is farther out from the curb than necessary, look closely. Bicyclists need to ride at least a door's width away from parked cars to avoid being hit by a suddenly opening door. Bicyclists also need to allow room to avoid potholes and debris and to pass double-parked cars.

Bicyclists may occupy any part of a traffic lane when their safety warrants it. If the lane is too narrow to share, it is safer for the bicyclist to communicate that information by riding in the center of the lane.

### ***Be Nice***

Traffic can be slow and frustrating. Don't take anger out on others. Threatening other road users with your voice or your vehicle is illegal, not just impolite.

**Bicyclists have the same right to the road that you do!**

*Brochure concepts and text borrowed with permission from the Boston Transportation Department, the City of Toronto, Toronto City Cycling Committee and Province of Ontario  
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