

## BROWARD SHERIFF'S OFFICE

2601 West Broward Boulevard,  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312

### BSO SUPPORTS TEXT TO 911

TO REPORT A CRIME TIP  
(954) 493-TIPS (8477)

NON-EMERGENCY DISPATCH  
(954) 764-HELP (4357)



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The Broward Sheriff's Office would like to thank  
AAA Auto Club for input on bike safety tips and  
material contained in this handout.



# BICYCLES ARE VEHICLES

## BICYCLE LAWS and SAFETY TIPS



**Sheriff Gregory Tony**  
[sheriff.org](http://sheriff.org)

## LEGAL STATUS

In Florida, a bicycle is legally defined as a vehicle. Bicyclists have rights to the roadway with exceptions and must obey the same traffic laws as the operators of other vehicles. The laws include stopping for stop signs and red lights, riding with the flow of traffic, using lights at night and yielding to right-of-way when entering a roadway.

### Bicycle Regulations FSS 316.2065

- A bicyclist must obey all traffic controls and signals.
- A bicyclist must use a permanent, regular seat for riding unless the bicycle was designed by the manufacturer to be ridden without a seat.
- No bicycle may carry more persons at one time than the number it is designed or equipped for. (Exception: Adults may carry children in a backpack or sling.)
- Except as provided in the previous paragraph, a bicycle rider must carry any passenger who is a child under 4 years of age, weighs less than 40 lb., in a seat or carrier that is designed to carry and protect the child from moving parts of the bicycle.
- A bicycle rider may not allow a passenger to remain in a child seat or carrier on a bicycle when the rider is not in immediate control of the bicycle.
- Every bicycle must be equipped with a brake or brakes that allow the rider to stop within 25 feet from a speed of 10 miles per hour on dry, level, clean pavement.
- Parents and guardians must not knowingly allow a child or minor ward to violate any provisions of this section.

### Wearing Helmet FSS 316.2065 (3) (d)

- A bicycle rider or passenger under 16 must wear a bicycle helmet that is properly fitted and fastened securely upon the passenger's head by a strap that meets the federal safety standard for bicycle helmets.

### Sidewalk Riding FSS 316.2065 (9) (10)

- When riding on sidewalks or in crosswalks, bicyclists have the same rights and duties as pedestrians.
- A bicyclist riding on sidewalks or in crosswalks must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and must give an audible signal before passing.

### Lighting FSS 316.2065 (7)

- A bicycle operating between sunset and sunrise must be equipped with a lamp on the front exhibiting a white light visible from at least 500 feet to the front and a lamp and reflector on the rear

- exhibiting a red light visible from 600 feet to the rear.
- Additional lighting is permitted and recommended. See the "Night Riding" section for safety tips.

### Roadway Position FSS 316.2065, (5) (a,b) (6)

- A bicyclist not traveling at the same speed as other traffic must ride as close as practicable to the right-hand curb, edge of the roadway or designated bike lane. A bicyclist may leave the right-most portion of the road in the following situations: when passing, making a left turn, to avoid hazards, or when a lane is too narrow for a bicycle and a car to share it safely.
- A bicyclist operating on a one-way street with two or more traffic lanes may ride as close to the left-hand edge of the roadway as is practicable.
- Persons riding bicycles upon a roadway may not ride more than two abreast except on paths or parts of roadways set aside for the exclusive use of bicycles. Persons riding two abreast may not impede traffic when traveling at less than the normal speed of traffic at the time and place and under the conditions then existing and shall ride within a single lane.

### Left Turns 316.151 (1) (b, c)

- A bicyclist intending to turn left at an intersection must approach the intersection in the extreme left-hand lane lawfully available to traffic moving in the direction of travel of such vehicle and must make the left turn so as to leave the intersection in a lane available to traffic moving in the same direction.
- A person riding a bicycle and intending to turn left is entitled to the full use of the lane from which the turn is made.
- In addition to the standard left turn, a bicyclist may proceed through the right-most portion of the intersection and turn as close to the curb or edge as possible at the far side.

### Signaling Turns FSS 316.155 (2) and FSS 316.157

- The bicyclist must signal an intention to turn during the last 100 feet traveling before turning. If a bicyclist needs both hands for control, the signal need not be given continuously.
- A bicyclist may signal intent to turn right by extending the left hand and arm upward or by extending the right hand and arm horizontally to the right side of the bicycle.

### Headsets FSS 316.304

- A bicyclist must not wear a headset, headphone or other listening device (other than a hearing aid) when riding.



# BICYCLES ARE VEHICLES



## AVOIDING ACCIDENTS

### Night Riding

Nearly 60% of all adult fatal bicycle accidents in Florida occur during twilight and night hours, although less than 3 percent of bicycle use takes place at that time.

Many factors compound the danger of riding at night, such as:

- Motorists driving under the influence of alcohol.
- Motorists' abilities to see what is ahead are limited to the area illuminated by headlights.
- Visibility is further reduced by the glare from the lights of oncoming cars.
- Roadways with motor vehicle speeds above 40 MPH pose an extreme risk at night.
- Red reflectors on the rear of a bicycle may be mistaken for reflectors on roadside mailboxes.
- Are you wearing highly reflective clothing? Is your bike light operating? Before riding at night, every bicyclist should consider the extreme risk.

### Night Riding Tips

When a car approaches from the rear at night, watch your shadow as it is cast by the headlights. If it moves to the right as the car nears, the driver has moved to the left to pass. If it is stationary, the driver may not have detected you. Move out of the way!

Additional lighting and reflectors are strongly encouraged for those who must ride at night. The use of leg lamps or any other lights that create motion should be considered. Battery-powered and generator-type systems are readily available and a small investment in staying alive. Reflective tape on the bicycle and reflective clothes are additional insurance.

### Failure to Yield

A crash may be caused by a failure by the bicyclist or motorist to yield the right-of-way at driveways and intersections. Making eye contact with a motorist will help. In addition, bicyclists can help prevent accidents by yielding the right-of-way when required, stopping for red lights and stop signs and scanning to make sure the path is clear before turning left.

### Wrong-Way Riding

Another cause of bicycle/car crashes is bicyclists riding against traffic. By riding against traffic, bicyclists remove themselves from the normal scanning pattern of other

vehicle operators, making them more likely to be hit. In addition, the reaction time of both the motorist and bicyclist approaching one another is cut dramatically. Riding on the right, as required by law, can help prevent this crash from happening.

### Opening Car Doors/Parked Cars

Some crashes result from a motorist opening the door of a parked car in front of an overtaking bike. Avoid this by riding no closer than three feet to a parked car. Also, watch for signs that a motorist wants to move into traffic. Be prepared to use the "panic stop."

### Overtaking Cars

Statistically, this is not a big problem during daylight hours; it usually occurs at night on rural roads and involves an unlighted bicyclist and a motorist who has been drinking. Many bicyclists worry about what is behind them (this is why some ride against traffic). Becoming proficient at scanning (see Scanning Tips) to occasionally check traffic to the rear will ease worries about involvement in this type of accident.

### Communicating With Motorists

Do your part in educating motorists about bicyclists' needs. Always signal your intentions and needs. If a motorist had been temporarily delayed while you are maneuvering, give a friendly wave of thanks. Being courteous promotes a safer riding environment and reduces road rage or aggressive driving incidents.

### Scanning Tips

Like most riding skills, scanning to the rear takes practice. If you have trouble looking over your shoulder without swerving, try the following:

- Get a friend to hold your handlebars while you sit on the bike. Look over your left shoulder, keeping both hands on the handlebars, and notice what your hands, arms and shoulders are doing. Your left side is probably pulling back on the handlebar.
- After a little practice at moving only your head, find an empty parking lot and try it while riding in a straight line. Then try dropping your left hand and resting it on your thigh while looking over your left shoulder and coasting for a while.

## SAFETY EQUIPMENT

### Helmets

Nearly 75% of all bicycle-related deaths are the result of

head injuries. The use of helmets would prevent many of these deaths. A study in the New England Journal of Medicine reported that helmet usage reduces the risk of head injury by 85% and brain injury by 88%. Riders under 16 are required by law to wear a helmet, but all riders are urged to do so.

A bicycle shop is an excellent place to buy a helmet. Wear a helmet that fits snugly but is not tight. Ensure that it has the CPSC sticker that shows it complies with standards established by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

### Gloves

Gloves provide protection for hands in case of a fall and a better grip on the handlebars.

### Mirrors

Use a rearview mirror to keep track of traffic approaching from behind. Mirrors that attach to glasses or a helmet allow for scanning by turning your head from side to side. Some mirrors attach to the handlebars. Research which would be more comfortable for you before purchasing.

### Safety Flag or Vest

A pennant-shaped flag or vest made of "day-glow" orange material helps where heavy traffic conceals a bicyclist from view. Being visible is a vital part of avoiding collisions. It is encouraged that every bicyclist be equipped or wear highly reflective clothing or a vest.

### Rear Carriers

Bicycle riding requires total concentration. Do not add to distractions by carrying things in your hands, such as cell phones, electronic devices or packages. Use a carrier.

## EMERGENCY MANEUVERS

*Note: There is an element of risk in practicing the following emergency maneuvers. You may fall, so wear long pants, long sleeves, gloves and a helmet. Start slowly, then work up to normal speed.*

**Rock Dodge:** A wide swerve around a pothole or rock can send you into the path of an overtaking auto. A "rock dodge" will allow you to avoid any last-minute hazards without swerving.

Toss a sponge into a clear area in an empty parking lot for practice. Slowly pedal directly toward the sponge, and at the last second, turn your handlebars left to avoid it. Quickly turn back to the right to prevent a fall. Then

straighten out. Hitting the object with your rear wheel is not serious since the front wheel steers the bicycle. Once you accomplish this maneuver, traffic behind you will not even notice it.

**Emergency Turns:** What do you do if a car suddenly turns into your path? Hopefully, you anticipate the problem and can stop in time. If you cannot stop, then turn **with** the vehicle. To do this, turn the front wheel to the left toward the car, forcing your body to lean to the right. Now quickly turn to the right at a sharp angle to follow alongside the vehicle. In most cases, you will avoid the collision. Practice this technique in the parking lot. It may feel uncomfortable at first.

**Panic Stop:** Stopping fast requires harder use of the front brake than the rear brake. However, this can cause you to catapult. To counteract this tendency, practice the following in an empty parking lot wearing a helmet: Ride slowly; then, at a predetermined point, apply both brakes evenly while moving back on the saddle and lowering your chest horizontally. As you move back and down, apply greater pressure to the front brake until it is about three times the pressure on the rear brake.

Continue practicing at gradually faster speeds, but remember, if you feel the rear wheel beginning to skid, let off a bit on the front brake.

## HANDLING HAZARDS

**Railroad Tracks:** Be sure to cross railroad tracks at a 90-degree angle; otherwise, the tracks may trap the front wheel, causing a fall.

**Potholes:** Hitting a pothole can cause a fall and injury or, at a minimum, damage wheel rims, spokes, and forks. A wide swerve around a pothole can send you into the path of an overtaking car. Use the "rock dodge" maneuver to avoid potholes.

**Grates:** Tires may fall through sewer and drainage grates. When the front tire drops, you go over the handlebars. Scan for traffic and move further into the lane to go around.

**Rain:** Watch out for slippery surfaces, especially leaves/branches, motor oil, and paint strips. Corner slowly, avoid puddles, and brake early.

**Sand, Gravel, Leaves:** Steer around these when possible. If you must ride over them, steer straight and never brake or turn sharply.