

# Don't Be a Road Warrior



Bicycle safely.  
Our reputation is riding on you.

Thomas M. Menino, Mayor  
Andrea d'Amato, Commissioner

## Bicycles are Vehicles

According to Massachusetts law, bicyclists have the same rights and duties as drivers of motor vehicles. (*MGL Ch.85 Sec. 11B; BTD Art. 1*)

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 traffic approaching. (*BTD Art. 6 Sec.22*)
- Do not cross the stop line when the traffic signal is red. (*BTD Art. 6 Sec.15*)
- Stop and yield to cross traffic at a stop sign. (*MGL Ch.89 Sec.9*)
- Stop for pedestrians in a crosswalk without traffic signals, and do not pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk. (*MGL Ch. 89 Sec. 11*)
- In preparing a left turn, 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. (*MGL Ch. 89 Sec. 4B; MGL Ch. 90 Sec. 14*)
- You may not ride on sidewalks. (*BTD Art. 6 Sec. 18*)



## Where To Ride on the Road

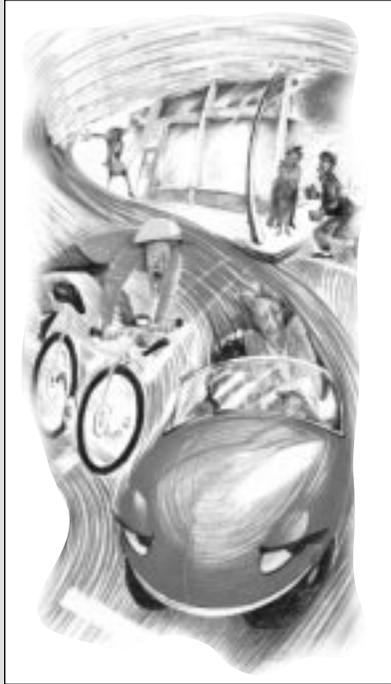
- Ride on the right side of the road, with the flow of traffic. (*BTD Art. 6 Sec. 2*) Motorists and pedestrians do not look for bicyclists coming from the wrong direction. Riding against traffic is the single largest cause of collisions with cars.
- Look ahead for potholes, debris, and other obstacles. As soon as you see one, look behind and merge left, as traffic permits, well before you reach the obstacle.
- Do not get close enough to parked cars so that opening doors may hit you.
- 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.

## Special Rules for Bicycles

- Your bicycle must have a white front light and a red rear light or rear reflector during hours of darkness. (*MGL Ch. 85 Sec. 11B*)
- Your bicycle must be able to stop within 30 feet from a speed of 15 mph when on a dry, clean, hard, level surface. (*MGL Ch. 85 Sec. 11B*)
- If you are 12 or younger, you must use a bicycle helmet. (*MGL Ch. 85 Sec. 11B*) Wearing a properly-fitted helmet greatly reduces the risk of brain injuries, the leading type of fatal and disabling injuries to bicyclists.
- When signaling a turn or a stop you may use either hand. (*MGL Ch. 85 Sec. 11B*)
- You must give your name and address when asked by a police officer. (*MGL Ch. 85 Sec. 11C*)

**Classes in Riding Skills & Bicycle Maintenance**  
Improve your city bicycling skills. Take a class.  
Contact MassBike, 617 542-BIKE; [www.massbike.org](http://www.massbike.org), or  
Bikes Not Bombs, 617-442-0004.

# Don't Be a Road Hog



Share the road.  
Bicycles are vehicles too.

*Thomas M. Menino, Mayor  
Andrea d'Amato, Commissioner*

## Bicycles are Vehicles and Belong on the Road

Bicyclists have the same rights and duties as drivers of motor vehicles. *(MGL Ch.85 Sec. 11B; BTD Art. 1)*

Respect for 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, slow and merge behind a bicyclist ahead of you to make your turn from the right edge of the road. *(MGL Ch. 90 Sec. 14)*
- When turning left, yield to on-coming bicyclists, even those at the far side of the road. *(MGL Ch. 90 Sec. 14)*  
Do not underestimate the speed of a bicyclist.
- A stop sign means you must stop and wait until no traffic is coming close enough to be a danger. *(MGL Ch. 89 Sec. 9)*
- A yield sign means you must wait for traffic, and this may well require you to stop. *(MGL Ch. 89 Sec. 9)*
- Signal well in advance of turns so that bicyclists know your intentions. *(MGL Ch. 90 Sec. 14B)*
- When getting out of a car, check for approaching bicyclists before opening the door.



## Make Room for Bicyclists

You may overtake only if it is safe to do so. *(BTD Art. 6 Sec. 5)*  
Change lanes to pass if you can't pass safely in the same lane. Leave plenty of room and pass at a safe speed *(MGL Sec. 89 Sec. 2; MGL Ch. 90 Sec. 14)*  
Do not cross the center line if you can't see the road at least 400 feet in front. *(MGL Ch. 89 Sec. 4)*  
Don't take unnecessary risks for the sake of convenience.

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 avoiding 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

City traffic can be slow and frustrating. Don't take anger out on others. Threatening other road users with your voice or your vehicle is impolite and illegal. Bicyclists have the same right to the road as you do.

### It's the Law

**MGL: The General Laws of Massachusetts.  
BTD: Boston Transportation Department  
Traffic Rules and Regulations**

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