

How to Safely Share the Road With Cyclists



By Lee Michael Katz

Pedal power is growing all over the country. Bike lanes are popping up everywhere and bike-riding has more than doubled in some cities. But the mismatch between a massive vehicle and a lightweight bicycle frame can have tragic consequences. Here are some ways to reduce the danger when sharing the road with cyclists:

Defensive driving extends to bikes. You drive a safe length behind other motorists, so don't ride the bumper of a bike. Leave adequate space for you to react—this is especially critical when passing a bicyclist.

Yield—and watch out for bicyclists who don't. Failure to yield by both motorists and bicyclists accounts for nearly 25% of collisions. Bicyclists can easily miss stop signs, so take extra care in bike-riding areas.

Pay extra attention to hidden bicyclists. With their small profile, bikes won't show up nearly as easily as a vehicle in your mirrors. For example, when turning right, check the curb lane and check over your right shoulder so you don't cut off any cyclists.

Open doors carefully. Your vehicle doors may open into a bike lane or travel path, so be careful when opening your doors. The last thing you want to do is knock over a passing cyclist.

Return the favor when biking. When you're pushing the bike pedals instead of the gas, don't zigzag between cars and signal with your hand when turning. You have the same responsibility to obey traffic laws on your bike as you do in your car.

