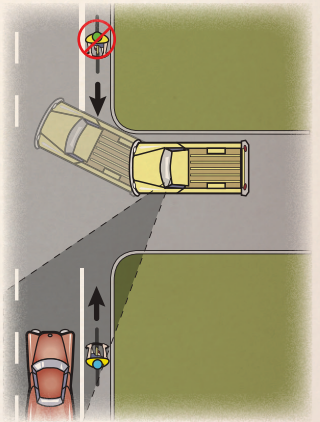
THE BICYCLIST'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

Live to ride. Ride to live.

Here's to you, Oregon riders! You've been rolling for longer than you've been walking, so it's no wonder you feel right at home on two wheels. You're saving money, reducing pollution and improving your health. But with all that fresh air comes a certain amount of vulnerability, so here are a few tips to keep you on the straight and vertical.

RIDE WITH TRAFFIC



Drivers pulling into traffic look only in the direction of oncoming cars. If you ride against traffic, drivers won't see you until they are on top of you...literally.

1

ABIDE
WHEN YOU RIDE

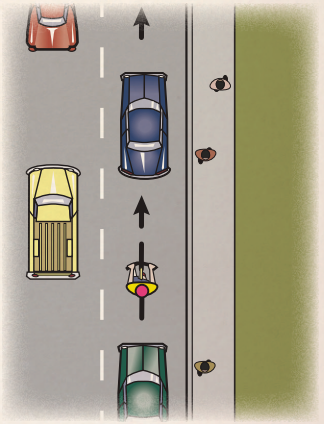
Go with the flow: Ride on the right, in the same direction as traffic. It's the law – and it will help you to be seen by drivers.

Pedal by the book. When on the road, your bike is a vehicle. That means you have the same rights – and responsibilities – as motorists. So obey all traffic signs, signals, lane markings and other rules of the road.

tip

It's the law to stop for a yellow light, too. Rushing through may not leave you enough time before the light changes.

STAY CENTERED



If there is no shoulder or bike lane ***and*** the travel lane is narrow, ride closer to the center of the lane where drivers can see you.

2

EXERCISE
SOME SELF CONTROL

Get a grip – keep at least one hand on the handlebars at all times. And be ready to brake at a moment's notice.

Keep to the right, but not so far to the right that you risk hitting the curb or leaving the paved road. And when you are riding past parked cars, keep an eye on those car doors – they have a way of swinging open quickly and unexpectedly.

tip

Stay sober in the saddle – or risk a DUII. Know why? You guessed it: your bike is a vehicle.

gear

CHECK YOURSELF
BEFORE YOU WRECK YOURSELF

Shield your brain – always wear a helmet.

Tune into traffic, not your earbuds.

Stow the phone – it can wait.

Dress to be seen. Yellow and lime green are especially effective colors in daylight; reflective accessories will make you visible in the dark.

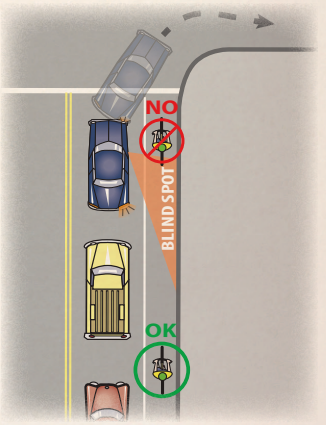
STOP! Brakes must be in good repair and powerful enough to let you stop easily and safely.

Light up the night – use reflectors and lights on front and back.

Gauge it right – tires should be in good condition and inflated to their recommended pressure.

Avoid a chain reaction – tuck in or hike up loose clothing so it doesn't get caught.

AVOID THE RIGHT HOOK



When close to an intersection, never pass vehicles on the right – it's a sure way to a knockout. Watch the right-turn signals and hang back until the coast is clear.

3

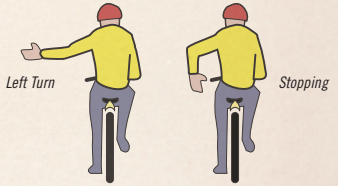
BE VISIBLE, BE ALERT

Be bright at night by using lights and reflectors on front and back (required by Oregon law!). And wear bright colors and/or reflective accessories.

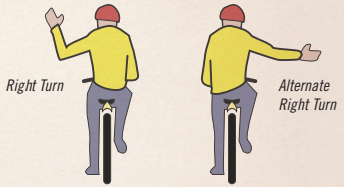
Steer clear of danger by watching out for vehicles waiting at stop signs or pulling out of parking spaces: drivers may not see you, especially if you're in their blind spot.

tip

Use the strobe mode of your LED light only during the day; at night it blinds drivers and fellow cyclists, and may actually put you in danger of a collision.



PRACTICE SIGN LANGUAGE.



Reflective tape on your sleeves or gloves will ensure that your every move is seen by drivers – especially at dusk and at nighttime.

4

NEVER
KEEP 'EM GUESSING

Be predictable to drivers – telegraph your every move with hand signals. The last thing you want to do is catch a driver by surprise... the surprise may be on you!

Ride wide: Allow at least three feet between yourself and motorists – it will give you time to avoid any sudden moves on their part.

tip

Don't take it for granted: Even if you're doing everything right, drivers may not see you – so ride defensively.

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Heading out for a scenic ride? Here are some safety tips before you go rural:

Plan your trip to make sure your entire route is bike-friendly and within your endurance limits.

Gear up: Check your tires, chains, brakes and light batteries. And don't forget the flat repair kit.

Watch your back with rear-view mirrors. And frequent shoulder checks can be a life-saver – especially prior to cresting a hill or entering a curve.

Be predictable: Ride in a straight line, no swerving or weaving, and use clear hand signals.

Watch for critters (including unleashed dogs!) in wooded areas and farming communities.

Think fast! Some motorists simply can't resist going fast on open country roads, and may not expect bicyclists on the roadway. So watch out and keep your cool.

Don't be left in the dark. Finish your ride before nightfall – rural roads lack the ambient light of urban areas, so drivers may not see you until it's too late.

tip

When the road is too narrow to ride on the shoulder, you have the right to take the lane. If that's outside your comfort zone, dismount and walk your bike until you feel it's safe to ride again.

Ride on!

For more info, tips and Oregon laws, follow these useful links:

Oregon Bicyclist Manual

Oregon Pedestrian and Bicycle Laws

How to ride in roundabouts

Bicycle helmet advice

Share the Road. *The Way to Go.*

Transportation Safety – ODOT