



## Tips for Motorists

### Sharing the Road with People Cycling

Under the Road Traffic Act 1974, bicycles are classed as vehicles and can be used on almost all gazetted roads throughout the State. Cyclists therefore have the same legal rights and responsibilities as motorists.

As fuel costs rise and people strive for a healthier lifestyle, the number of bicycles on our roads will continue to increase. Consequently, motorists will be sharing the road with more and more people choosing to cycle on our roads.

Someone on a bike is vulnerable because of their size, low visibility and overall lack of protection. Also, a cyclist is permitted to ride on the road at a lower age than a licensed driver, and these young cyclists may lack road sense.

Motorists can reduce cyclist crashes by applying a few road-sharing strategies. These tips for motorists make a big difference to the safety of cyclists when sharing the road with motor vehicles. People exercising on a bike often ride in large groups on the road. They usually cycle in a tight formation to use up less space, but they are not allowed to ride more than two abreast.

#### Cutting off a cyclist

Cyclists may be travelling faster than you think (30 km/h on the flat and 60 km/h or more when going downhill). Always bear this in mind when turning across their line, especially at intersections and roundabouts.

**Tip:** When making a left turn, indicate early and don't turn across a cyclist with an insufficient braking distance.

**Tip:** When making a right turn across oncoming traffic, be careful not to turn in front of approaching cyclists owing to underestimating their speed.

**Tip:** On blind left hand bends, keep space between your vehicle and the edge of the road, as there may be a cyclist ahead that you are unable to see. A metre matters!

Remember that you must signal for cyclists just as you would for other road traffic. Also watch for cyclists' hand signals so you can be aware of their intentions.





## Opening a door into someone cycling past

Because people often feel safer cycling on the shoulder of the road, they may come close to parked cars. Opening a car door suddenly into the path of cyclists gives them little or no time to avoid a collision.

**Tip:** Park your vehicle considerately so that you will not obstruct riders and always check behind before opening a door.



## Driving too close to a cyclist

Bicycle tyres are much thinner than car tyres and cyclists may need to move out and around obstacles on the road such as potholes, grates, drains and loose objects that would pose no problem to a car. These, and parked vehicles, may cause people to move further out into the traffic than usual. Windy weather and heavy rain may also cause cyclists to swerve towards the centre of the road.

**Tip:** Always leave plenty of room (at least half a car width) when passing someone on a bike. If necessary, wait a few seconds behind them until they have completed their manoeuvre around an obstacle.

**Tip:** Be aware of any “squeeze points” on narrow sections of road, where cyclists will be forced to move out into the traffic lanes. Slow down and allow them enough room to negotiate these sections safely.

## Dazzling a cyclist with your headlights

Just as with other vehicles, your headlights can dazzle an oncoming rider.

**Tip:** Always dip your lights well before reaching an approaching cyclist.

Above all, motorists should “think bike” at all times. Expect to see bicycles when you are driving and take care when you do.



## Who to contact at the Department of Transport

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