



Department of
Transport

People on shared paths



WALK
there today

In Western Australia, shared paths are enjoyed by a variety of users, including walkers, bike riders, people with prams, joggers, skaters and people on mobility devices. Each of these path users has an equal right to the paths and to share them. Responsible sharing of the path ensures a safe and enjoyable experience for all.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FOOTPATH AND A SHARED PATH?

Shared paths are different from footpaths because they have been designed to suit the greatest range of users. This means that shared paths tend to be wider (minimum 2m in width), are straighter and have a smoother surface than footpaths. They also usually have gentler bends and gradients than footpaths in order to ensure good visibility ahead to maximise safety. Shared paths usually have a painted centre line and are signed (either on the pavement or with an upright sign).





USING PATHS

People on foot are permitted on all types of paths (except those marked 'cyclists only'). Bike riders who are younger than 12 years are allowed to ride on footpaths (unless a 'no bicycle' sign has been erected). Bike riders 12 years and older should only use a shared path or the road. High speed riding should only be on the road or on designated shared paths, recognising that the paths are a different riding environment to the road and adjusting their behaviour accordingly, such as reducing speed.

Please consider the setting, be prepared to share and exercise your better judgement when using all paths. Ultimately, the key to 'path happiness' is to respect other users and remain courteous, considerate, and patient.

SAFETY TIPS FOR ALL SHARED PATH USERS

As a pedestrian

(including using a motorised/non-motorised wheelchair):

- Keep to the left at all times, unless overtaking – all path users should keep to their left, including pets and children. If you hear a bike bell, move safely to the left and allow the bike rider to pass.
- Share the path - no one should unreasonably obstruct or prevent the passage of other path users. If you are in a group, you should still provide sufficient room for other people to pass.
- Be considerate – keep your pets close and on leashes, ensure children are supervised and move off the path if you stop for any reason.
- Be aware – keep the volume of your headphones/iPod at a level which allows you to hear bike riders and other pedestrians approaching. Make sure you look before crossing a path, changing direction or entering a path.
- Be predictable –try not to change direction suddenly or meander on the path.
- Be visible – especially at night or in dim light conditions by wearing light coloured or reflective clothing and carry a small torch.
- Acknowledge others – if necessary, let others know that you are aware of their presence.

When bike riding:

- Give way – pedestrians always have right of way and so bike riders must give way at all times. At path intersections, bike riders must signal their intention to turn via hand signals and give way to motor vehicles on the intersecting road.
- Give space – try to leave a metre when passing other path users.
- Ring your bell – ring your bell early to alert pedestrians of your approach. Courtesy of other path users is demonstrated through ringing your bell.
- Slow down – slow down and be courteous when passing pedestrians and be prepared to stop if you need.
- Be considerate - ride at a safe and considerate speed, keep to your left when not overtaking and ride in single file.
- Be aware – watch out for children, pets and older pedestrians who can be unpredictable in their movements.
- Be visible – bike riders must use lights when riding at night or in low visibility conditions. In addition, high visibility clothing and/or reflective markers are recommended.
- Be sensible - pets should not be tied to a moving bicycle and avoid riding recklessly (e.g. too fast and under the influence of alcohol/drugs).

In following these guidelines for path use, all users should have a safe and enjoyable experience. Conflicts generally only arise because of inconsiderate behaviour and/or where the path has been poorly designed or obstructed (e.g. by parked cars, bins). Fortunately, the great majority of conflicts only result in inconvenience and anxiety rather than injuries.

To report any path hazards (such as potholes, broken glass or broken branches):

- Contact the relevant local council.
- Complete a Hazard Report Form on the [Department of Transport's website](#).
- Complete a Report a Problem form on the [Main Roads WA website](#).

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