



MINIMUM 3 IN TENNESSEE

FAQ'S

How should I pass a person riding a bicycle?

1. *Slow Down.*

First, slow down.

2. *Look and Wait until Safe.*

Wait until there is no oncoming traffic. Wait until you are on a clear, straight stretch of road so you can safely pass. Passing on hills can also be dangerous because it limits visibility. Don't try to squeeze between a bicyclist and other traffic in the adjacent lane. On the vast majority of roads, travel lanes aren't wide enough for this to be safe. Attempting to squeeze past a bicyclist in the same lane is the most common cause of car-overtaking-bicycle collisions. You'll need space in the next lane in order to pass, so look for a safe gap in that traffic and wait as required.

3. *Change Lanes to Pass.*

Signal and then change lanes to pass, leaving at least 3 feet between your vehicle and the bicyclist. When traveling uphill or if you are in a large vehicle, leave more than 3 feet.



Why 3 feet?

A minimum passing distance of 3 feet from people on bicycles keeps them protected from dangers such as a side view mirror collision or wind burst pushing them over. Bicyclists also need space to maneuver in the event they need to avoid a pothole or road debris.

It's also the law ! Tennessee Code Annotated 55-8-175 (a)(C) and Knoxville Municipal Code Sec. 17-446(c)



Can I pass on a double-yellow line?

Drivers may cross a double yellow line to pass a bicyclist, if the driver can do so safely. Only pass if there is no oncoming traffic.

What if I start to pass and I realize that I've misjudged oncoming traffic?

Simple: Press your brake pedal, and slip back behind the bicyclist(s).

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How do I safely turn around bicyclists?

When turning right or left, make sure you look for people on bicycles. Yield to bicycles, just as you would other vehicles. A driver sometimes assumes the bicyclist is not going very fast, but a bicyclist can easily get to 15- or 20- mph speeds. When in doubt, yield to the bicyclist.

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What about right turns on roads with bike lanes?

A right-turning motorist should move into the bike lane before turning, first checking to make sure there are no bicyclists in the bike lane, signaling, then merging right into the lane closest to the curb, and then making the actual turn. Always check your blind spots.

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What is a sharrow?

Shared lane pavement markings (or "sharrows") are bicycle symbols carefully placed to guide bicyclists to the best place to ride on the road, avoid car doors, and remind drivers to expect bicyclists in the center of the lane.



What are the factors that contribute to car/bike crashes?

39% involve motorists failing to yield when turning

29% were bicyclists struck while riding on the sidewalk. (Riding a bicycle on the sidewalk is legal in most places. Bicycle safety educators generally warn against riding on the sidewalk, because of the danger from turning motor vehicles. However, in many cases bicyclists ride on the sidewalk because there aren't safe places to ride on the street.)

11% involve bicyclists riding against traffic.

10% were bicyclists struck from behind by a driver.

7% involve bicyclists riding at night without lights. (Tennessee law requires bicyclists riding after dark to use a mounted headlight and rear reflectors. A red light is also recommended.)

These statistics are from local crash data. There's more information on the [interactive pedestrian/bicycle crash map](#).

Why do bicyclists ride in the middle of the travel lane?

Driving in the center of the lane protects bicyclists against the most common motorist-caused crashes: sideswipes, right hooks, left crosses, and drive-outs. A bicyclist's top safety priority is to ensure he or she can be seen by motorists with whom they might potentially be in conflict, and bicycling in the middle of a lane is one of the most effective ways to do that. Most overtaking crashes involve a motorist who attempts to squeeze past (illegally) in a lane that is too narrow to share.

Why isn't that bicyclist in the bike lane or shoulder?

When you're driving you can't see hazards the way people on bicycles can. Broken glass can cause a flat tire, and gravel, metal grates, and potholes can cause a crash. Parked cars are another hazard due to exiting drivers who may open the car door into the path of a bicyclist.