

What about parked cars?

Here's a simple safety rule: Don't ride close enough to a parked car to get hit by its door. That means riding in a straight line about three feet away. If you ride a good straight line, motorists coming up from behind won't mind.



The worst case:

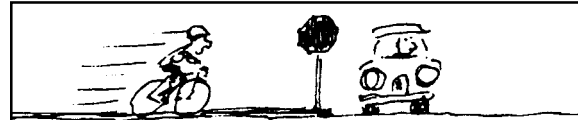
One of the worst types of roadways you'll have to deal with is a narrow high speed two lane road with lots of traffic. These can be killers, especially after dark.

Try to avoid them if possible or ride at a quieter time. If you can't, ride a very straight line near the right edge (give yourself two feet or so to the soft shoulder) and get off as soon as there's another route you can take.

What about the sidewalk?

If you're a little kid or you go very slow, riding on a sidewalk may be okay, IF it's legal in your town.

If not, stay off sidewalks. Adult riders who can keep up a good pace (eight to 20 mph, for example) don't belong on sidewalks. At intersections and driveways, they're much more likely to get hit by cars than cyclists who ride on the road.



Straight talk about "Wrong-way Riding::

If you ride against the flow of traffic, you're asking for it. Wrong-way riding is one of the biggest causes of car/bike crashes.

Car drivers don't look for traffic in weird places. And riding against traffic puts you in a very weird place!

But wrong-way riding isn't just a good way to get hurt. It's illegal and a good way to get a ticket!

For more information:

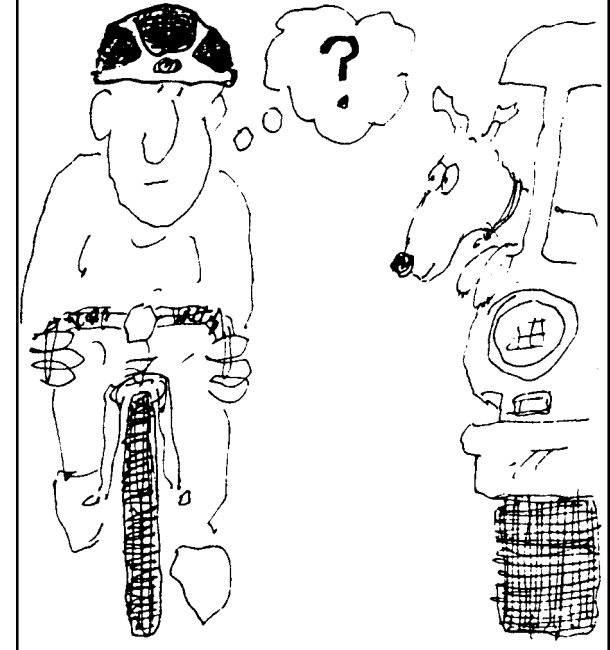
We've got all kinds of bike riding info. If you want more, write to us:

State Bicycle/Pedestrian Program
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street, MS 82
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450
(850) 487-1200
E-mail: theo.petritsch@dot.state.fl.us
Web Site: www.dot.state.fl.us/safety

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Just where do I belong???

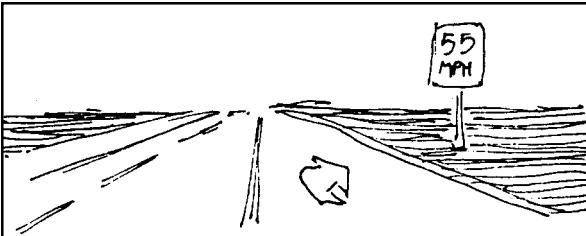
Knowing where to ride on the road is important to cyclists. Here are some tips...



Tips for adult bicyclists

At first, you may feel scared to ride "in traffic" with other vehicle drivers. You may not think you belong there. And if you try it for the first time during Friday evening rush hour on the very busiest roads in town, you'll be right!

But if you practice your riding skills on quiet streets, you'll be able to build up your confidence gradually and increase your abilities. One day, you may be able to handle those busy streets without being scared.



A high speed road problem:

Some high speed roads have long right turn lanes. These can be a problem if you are going straight. Here's a tip:

First, as you approach the lane, look back. If traffic is steady, ride onto the right turn lane and then pull off at the right edge. Wait for a gap in traffic and cross the turn lane and ride near the right edge of the straight through lane.

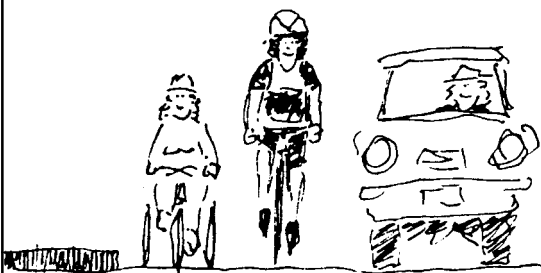
If the right turn lane goes on for a long distance, ride at the right edge of the straight-through lane. This won't be fun but is better than being trapped in a right turn lane.

These roads are worth complaining about, especially if the straight through lane is narrow!

How do you decide where to ride? Ask yourself these questions:

1. How fast am I going?

Here's the idea: the closer you're going to the speed of traffic, the farther out in the roadway you should ride.



If you're going a lot slower than everyone else, keep well over to the right side of the road. It's just not possible to safely "mix it up" with cars that are doing 10 to 60 mph more than you are.

If you are going slower than everyone else but not THAT much slower, ride a little closer to the stream of traffic. This will keep motorists from cutting you off at intersections.

If you are going almost as fast as everyone else, ride just to the right of the traffic stream. That's the safest place because people are more likely to see you and you'll be going too fast to ride near the curb.

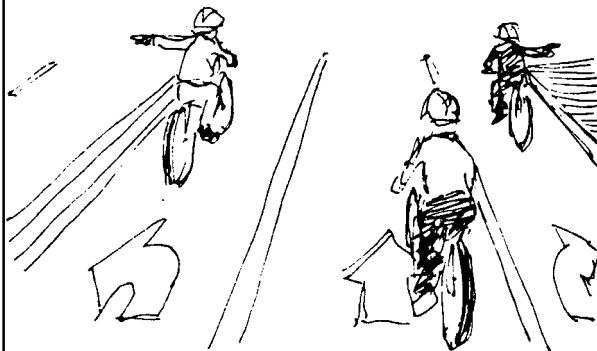
If you're going as fast as everyone else, take your place in the traffic lane. You won't be holding anyone up AND you will be very visible.

Note: If you can go faster than the rest of traffic. DON'T ride past on the right. That's a good way to get cut off by a car; motorists can't see someone coming on their right rear.

If the situation permits, you may be able to pass on the left just as a car would. Some drivers don't believe a cyclist can keep up with traffic. But in rush hour, the cars sometimes go awfully slow.

2. Where am I going?

On roads where you can pretty much keep up with traffic, ride in the lane for where you are going...



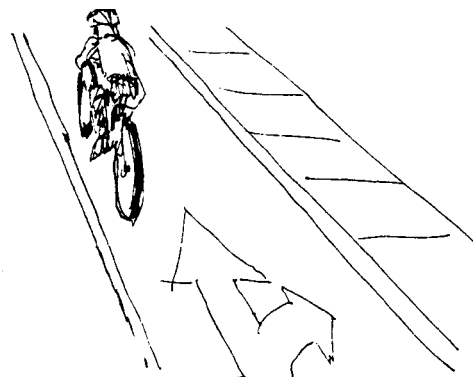
If you're going straight, ride in the lane for straight-through traffic. Don't ride straight in a right turn lane.

If you are turning left, move into the left turn lane if there is one. Once you're there, ride in the middle of the turn lane. As you go around the corner, move towards the right side of the new road.

If there isn't a left turn lane, merge over close to the centerline and turn from there.

If you're going right, move into the right turn lane. If there isn't one, move towards the right edge of the roadway.

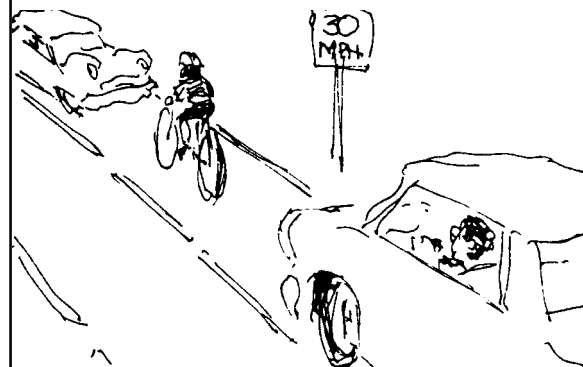
What about optional turn lanes? In lanes where you can turn or go straight, ride on the side of the lane best for where you are going.



If you're going straight in an optional straight/right turn lane, ride towards the left side of the lane. If you're turning right from that lane, move towards the right side.

3. How wide is the road?

What a bike rider looks at is the width of the lane he or she wants to ride in.

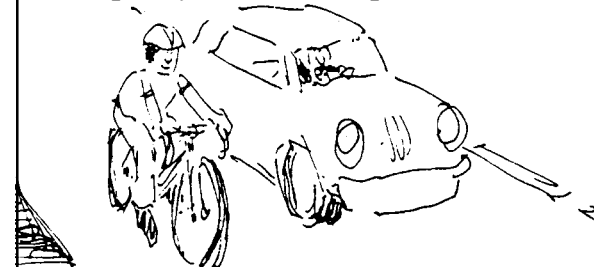


If it's very narrow (say eight or nine feet wide), you'll have no choice but to

ride near the middle. A motorist can't safely pass you in such a narrow lane. For your own protection, you'll have to ride farther out than you may like.

By the way, the law allows you to do this.

If the lane is wide enough to share, ride at the right side. But don't ride in the gutter within a foot of the curb. That puts you in a bad spot!



If the lane is very wide, ride to the right of the stream of traffic but well away from the right edge. Traffic will be able to pass you easily AND you'll be far enough out to avoid hassles with turning or crossing traffic.

The basic skills you need to mix with traffic:

1. Good control of your bike;
2. The ability to look back and to ride with one hand;
3. The ability to judge speed and distance;
4. The ability to negotiate with other traffic.

Note: these skills are covered in another of our pamphlets called "City Cycling". Write for it today!