

Don't Be A Road Warrior!



Bicycle Safely
Our reputation is riding on you



Office of the Governor
NH Department Of Transportation
NH Department Of Safety
NH Highway Safety Agency

Bicycles are Vehicles

According to New Hampshire law, bicyclists have the same rights and duties as drivers of motor vehicles. (RSA 265:143)

However, the reputation of all bicyclists is hampered by the few cyclists who ride outside the law. Riding by the same set of rules as motorists makes you predictable and greatly reduces your risk of a crash. Law-abiding actions send a message to motorists: "I belong here – and I'm going to share the road in a predictable, courteous way; just as I expect you to."

Two Wheels or Four, The Law is the Same

- Before entering the roadway, yield the right of way to approaching traffic. (RSA 265:32)
- A bicyclist traveling at less than normal traffic speed shall remain on the right side as far as possible except when unsafe to do so. (RSA 265:144-11)
- Stop and yield to cross traffic at a stop sign. (RSA 265:30-I)
- Don't cross the stop line when the traffic signal is red. (RSA 265-30-I)
- Stop for pedestrians in a crosswalk without traffic signals, and don't pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk. (RSA 265:35-I&IV)
- In preparing to turn left, do so from the farthest left lane available. (RSA 265:42) To prepare for the turn, first look behind and merge to the center line or left turn lane as traffic permits, signaling to get the cooperation of following drivers as necessary.
- Don't ride on sidewalks (RSA 265:26-a)
- Don't ride the wrong way on a one-way street (RSA 265:23-II)
- Any bicyclist shall stop upon demand of a peace officer and permit his bicycle to be inspected. (RSA 265:144-8)
- A bicyclist must wear at least one item of reflective apparel such as a reflective vest, jacket, or helmet from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise. (RSA 265:144-12)
- Always wear a well-fitted bike helmet – it can save your life!

NH cities and towns have the power to make additional ordinances regulating cycling within their boundaries.

Where to Ride on the Road

- Ride on the right side of the road, with the flow of traffic. (RSA 265:16-II) Motorists and pedestrians do not look for bicyclists coming from the wrong direction. Riding against traffic is the single largest cause of collisions with cars.
- Look ahead for potholes, debris, and other obstacles. As soon as you see one, look behind and merge left, as traffic permits, well before you reach the obstacle.
- Do not ride so close to parked cars that opening doors may hit you. In an urban situation one may have to ride close to parked cars, look ahead through the cars' rear windows to look for drivers who may be about to open their doors.
- Do not pass on the right of cars turning right.
- Where there is space, leave enough room for faster traffic to pass. You may occupy any part of a lane when your safety warrants it. Never compromise your safety for the convenience of a motorist behind you. (RSA 265:23-II)

Special Rules for Bicyclists

- Persons riding bicycles two or more abreast shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic and, on laned roadway, shall ride within a single lane. (RSA 265:144-5)
- No bicycle shall be used to carry more persons at one time than the number for which it is designed and equipped. (RSA 265:144-2)
- No person operating a bicycle shall hitch onto a car or any other vehicle moving upon a way. (RSA 265:144-3)
- No person operating a bicycle shall carry any package, bundle or article which prevents the rider from keeping at least one hand on the handlebars. (RSA 265:144-4)
- No bicycle shall be operated unless the steering, brakes, tires, and other required equipment are all in safe condition. (RSA 265:144-9)
- Riders under the age of 16 must wear a helmet when operating a bicycle on a public way. (RSA 265:144-10)
- When bicycling after dark you must use a white front headlight and a red rear light or rear reflector visible for 300 feet. (RSA 266:86)