

Bike Safety Outline

Introduction

When I'm trail riding, the path is my own – no rules – no roads - no other vehicles. But on city streets riding safely is a team effort. Hi, I'm Aaron Romaine. I've spent most of my life riding bike – as a racer and as a commuter. I've also spent years working as a bicycle specialist at Scheels All Sports. The City of Fargo is becoming a more bike friendly community – there are nearly 20 miles of on street bike lanes and many more miles of shared use paths and designated bike routes.

There are many advantages for cyclists who choose to use bike lanes:

- They provide a designated, visible space for cyclists and motorists,
- They're convenient, and
- Offer better connectivity to access the F-M area.
- Bike lanes are safer than riding in the vehicle lane, and
- Provide more predictable interaction between bicyclists and drivers.
- Whether you're biking to school, work or just out enjoying the ride, bike lanes are a great option to get to your destination faster and safer.

We're going to talk about how to use bike lanes and what the road markings mean but first, let's go over some basic bike safety principles:

- Stay alert when you're on the road. Be aware of traffic and pedestrians.
- Be visible – wear bright colored clothing and reflective wear, especially at night. Reflectors and lights are not only the law but will make it easier for driver to see you. In many car-bike collisions, drivers didn't "see" the cyclist.
- Be predictable by following the rules of the road.
- In most car-bike collisions, traffic violations by either the cyclist or driver (sometimes both) were a contributing factor.
- And, wear a helmet to help reduce serious injury during a fall or a collision.

Bike lane basics for cyclists and motorists

- So, what do the markings mean?
 - Solid lines represent a designated lane for bikes, however, vehicles *do* need to cross these lanes at driveways, parking lots and intersections.
 - At these points, you may notice dashed lines. Cars may cross dashed lines after checking for cyclists.
- **Drivers**
 - Let's talk about our responsibilities as drivers of cars.
 - Always expect cyclists to be using bike lanes.
 - Although drivers may cross bike lanes to turn and access driveways or parking lots, drivers should take extra care to avoid cutting them off.

- Motorists MAY drive in a bike lane to make a turn at the “dashed” lines but only after looking for and yielding to cyclists in the lane. Bicyclists always have the right of way in bike lanes.
 - Motorists should not park in a bike lane or block a bike lane at an intersection while waiting at a red light.
 - **Cyclists**
 - Bike lanes are great places to ride but **cyclists have responsibilities too**. They must yield to pedestrians, follow the rules of the road, and stay alert for vehicles turning across bike lanes.
 - Cyclists are not LEGALLY required to use a bike lane, in fact, in certain instances a cyclist must leave a bike lane to turn or avoid road hazards like debris, opening car doors and potholes.
 - Cyclists are required to ride with the direction of traffic
 - As a general rule of thumb, children 10 and under should not be on the roadway without supervision of an adult. Riding on a sidewalk may be a safer option on busier streets.
 - Let’s talk about Entering and exiting bike lanes. Cyclists frequently need to enter, exit and make turns from bike lanes. To do this safely, remember this scan, signal, move principal.
 - SCAN-SIGNAL-MOVE
 - First, SCAN for traffic, cyclists and pedestrians to find a safe opening.
 - Second, use an arm SIGNAL to communicate your intention to move.
 - Third, MOVE to complete your merge or turn.
 - Sometimes a bicyclist may need to enter a bike lane from across the street.
 - On busy roadways or during heavy traffic times, consider walking your bike across an intersection or at a crosswalk.
 - Follow all traffic laws, especially for stop signs and red lights and signal your intention to turn.
- The City of Fargo has two unique left-side bike lanes for the convenience of riders around NDSU campus
 - The lanes, located on 10th Street North and University Drive, offer convenient connections between the NDSU main and downtown campuses.
 - As an added safety measure, these lanes have a 2 foot “buffer zone” between the bike lane and traffic lane better defining the spaces for cyclists and motorists.
 - When entering a left-side bike lane...
 - You may need to cross a 2-lane, one-way road to access it
 - Try to use a controlled, signaled intersection to cross the roadway and enter the bike lane - especially during peak traffic time. Be especially alert to oncoming and turning vehicles.
 - It’s OK to leave the bike lane to turn, if you need to but, remember to use the SCAN-SIGNAL-MOVE principle before turning into or from the bike lane.
- Conclusion/Summary
- Now that you know how bike lanes work, give them a try.
 - They’re safe, convenient and provide a designated, visible space for cyclists and motorists.
 - Remember, we’re all trying to get to our destinations safely. Let’s “Share the Road Fargo.”