

DRAFT - NCATA Background Paper – DRAFT
(not for distribution until Approved by NCATA Board of Directors)

Subject: Motor Vehicle Driver Education Concerning Cyclists and Pedestrians

Summary: There is concern that motor vehicle drivers are not aware of the rights and responsibilities of cyclists and pedestrians. This paper covers the current situation and recommends a course of action. Background research indicates that current NC Driver Handbooks adequately cover cyclist and pedestrian rights and responsibilities. NCATA recommends three actions to heighten the awareness of these issues.

Discussion:

NCATA is concerned that motor vehicle operators are not sufficiently aware of the rights and responsibilities of cyclists and pedestrians. We examined the information that is presented in the May 2009 NC Drivers Handbook and found that issues and instructions concerning bicycling and bicyclists are addressed on two full pages (pages 95 & 96) and on nine other pages. Pedestrians are addressed in a separate Handbook section on Page 97. Attachment 1 to this paper summarizes those passages in the Handbook.

We conclude that the current NC Drivers Handbook adequately addresses the rights and responsibilities for motor vehicle drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

We also examined the Defensive Driving Course guide published by the Safety and Health Council of North Carolina. This booklet is used in the courses conducted by Community Colleges across the State to allow drivers to lessen the severity of traffic violation penalty points. All of page 35 of this booklet addresses the need for motor vehicle operators to respect the rights of cyclists and pedestrians (see Attachment 2).

Given that the current NC Driver's Handbook and the Defensive Driving Course booklet adequately address cyclist and pedestrian issues, the question becomes "What is needed to make motor vehicle drivers more aware of this information?"

- In 2008 a NCDOT official said they couldn't give us access to the Tests, but that they *"Include two questions on Bicycles in each test"*.
- The NC Safety and Health Council needs to ensure that the community colleges emphasize in the Defensive Driving Course
- Law enforcement officers must understand the laws that affect cyclists and pedestrians.

NCATA recognizes the value of the new "The Peloton Project" in the Triangle area in this education effort. From their website (<http://www.thepelotonproject.com/>) :

"The Peloton Projects works to reduce the hostility that exists between motorists and cyclists by:

- Collaborating with local law enforcement agencies.
- Developing education programs for motorists and cyclists.
- Encouraging cyclists to ride safely, predictably, and responsibly on the road."

Recommended Actions:

- NCDOT should ensure that at least two cycling and one pedestrian questions are included in all NC Driver's Tests .
- The NC Safety and Health Council must ensure that the Community Colleges teaching the Defensive Driving Course understand the importance the materials on Pedestrian and Cyclists rights and responsibilities.
- NCATA support the Peloton Project

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Attachment 1: Motor Vehicle Driver Education about Cyclists and Pedestrians

The May 2009 NC Drivers Education Handbook contains numerous references to bicycle laws and responsibilities. It has only a single page on pedestrians.

The following are excerpts from the May 2009 NC Drivers Education Handbook
http://www.ncdot.org/dmv/driver_services/drivershandbook/download/NCDL_English.pdf

[From the Index on Pages 6 & 7](#)

Chapter 6 — Sharing the Road.....Page 95
Bicycles.....Page 95
Pass with Care, Go with the Flow, Be Visible, Think Bike

[From Page 30](#)

[This is from a table of Points received against motorists](#)

Failure to yield right of way to bicycle, motor scooter or motorcycle - 4 Points

[From Page 31](#)

[This is from a table of Points received against drivers of Commercial Vehicles](#)

Failure to yield right of way to bicycle, motor scooter or motorcycle - 5 Points

[From Page 51](#)

[This is from a section on turning while driving](#)

Motorcycles and bicycles are especially hard to see during a turn.

[From Page 53](#)

[This is from a section on general driving guidance](#)

The law requires at least two feet of clearance between your vehicle and the vehicle or bicycle

[From Page 59](#)

Bicycle Lanes

When a bicycle lane or bike path travels on or adjacent to the roadway, please pay special attention to bicyclists as you approach and move through an intersection. Because bicyclists ride to the right of motor vehicle traffic, the potential exists for a crash between the bicyclist who is moving straight ahead through the intersection and the motorist who is turning right.

[From Page 71](#)

In situations when you have to deal with two or more unavoidable dangers at the same time, adjust by giving the most room to the greatest or most likely danger. Suppose there are approaching vehicles to your left and a child on a bicycle to your right. The child is most likely to make a sudden move, so give the child more room.

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[From Pages 95 to 97](#)

Chapter 6

Sharing the Road

Our streets and highways are becoming more crowded every day. Therefore, it is necessary that you, as a driver or pedestrian, know and practice the rules of the road. You should always be aware of the traffic around you and be prepared for emergency situations.

Bicycles

Bicycle riding is an important means of transportation, particularly for traveling to and from work and school. Because bicycles are vehicles, bicyclists must obey the same traffic laws as other drivers. Bicyclists usually ride on the right side of the lane, but are entitled to use the full lane.

Pass with Care

A bicyclist staying to the right in their lane is accommodating following drivers by making it easier to see when it is safe to pass, and easier to execute the pass. Drivers wishing to pass a bicyclist may do so only when there is abundant clearance and no oncoming traffic is in the opposing lane. When passing a bicyclist, always remember the bicyclist is entitled to use of the full lane.

Go with the Flow

It is especially important for bicyclists to go with the flow of traffic, NOT against the flow. Ride right, with the traffic, NOT facing traffic. Motorists often do not look in the direction of bicyclists riding the wrong way.

Like drivers, bicyclists must:

- Ride on the right side of the road;
- Stop for stop signs and red lights; and
- Give hand signals.

[Chapter 6 — Sharing the Road Page 96](#)

Be Visible

Visibility is important during both daylight hours and at night. During the daylight, avoid being obscured by other vehicles. At night, the law requires that a bicycle be equipped with a light on the front visible for a distance of at least 300 feet and a red light or reflector on the rear visible for a distance of at least 200 feet.

Think Bike

Bicyclists can be expected on all roads except where expressly prohibited. Bicycles are narrow and typically operate at the right of the lane, so they may be obscured and difficult to detect.

Avoid the left cross, drive out and right hook types of potential collisions shown below.

(The preceding is accompanied by a three window diagram showing categories of potential collisions with bicycles on Page 96)

Children on bicycles can be unpredictable. Be certain your child has been instructed about how to ride a bicycle properly and knows the necessary signs, signals and rules.

All bicycle riders and passengers under age 16 must wear an approved protective bicycle helmet and must be seated on a saddle seat. A passenger weighing less than 40 pounds or less than 40 inches in height must be seated in a bicycle restraining seat.

The same driving while impaired laws that apply to motor vehicles also apply to bicycles.

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[Chapter 6 — Sharing the Road on Page 97](#)

For more information about bicycle riding skills for yourself and your child, write to:

NC Department of Transportation
Bicycle & Pedestrian Division
1552 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1552
or call (919) 807-0777

[From Page 97](#)

You as a Pedestrian

As drivers, we must watch out for pedestrians on the roadway. In cities, about two of every five persons killed by motor vehicle crashes are pedestrians; in rural areas, the rate is about one of every 10. Most of the pedestrians killed are children, elderly persons or those who have been drinking alcoholic beverages.

When you are a pedestrian, do all you can to make yourself visible and to help drivers to prevent crashes.

Pedestrians should always:

- walk on the left side of the road facing traffic;
- wear or carry something white — do not assume that drivers can see you;
- do everything you can to make yourself visible to drivers;
- be ready to move out of the way in case a driver cannot see you; and
- at night, remember that it is more difficult for drivers to see you — use a flashlight.



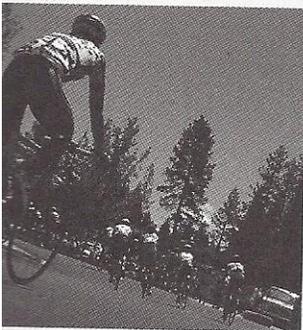
Pedestrians

Why are we talking about pedestrians as a traffic condition? Pedestrian traffic is part of all traffic.

Traffic is a danger to pedestrians as well. About 5,900 pedestrians are killed and 70,000 injured by vehicles every year. Almost 50 percent of these deaths and injuries occurred when pedestrians crossed or entered at or between intersections. The majority of the victims were under 15 years of age. Walking, standing, playing in the roadway, and working in the roadway are causes of pedestrian deaths and injuries.

What you can do?

- » Be a cooperative defensive driver by giving pedestrians a break. Slow down; use the “what if” strategy.
- » Give pedestrians the right of way in crosswalks. Be patient!
- » Do not wave pedestrians across the street.
- » When you are in residential areas and school zones, be on the look out for children especially on school days, holidays, or in summer. Please do not forget—children march to their own drummer.



What Motorists Should Know About Bicyclists

In our country today a lot of folks rely on the bike – and on you, the driver of a motor vehicle – to get around safely. Some drivers feel that the road is solely their domain. But that’s not the case. Generally, bicyclists are prohibited from using freeways and interstate highways. On all other roads, both large and small, bikes belong and cyclists have a right to use the road just as motorists do.

What can you do?

- » Be considerate—bicyclists have the same right as any motor vehicle.
- » Be generous—share the space and give cyclists trailing room.
- » Be patient—give them their space and pass with care.
- » Be aware—check for bikes in your side view mirror before opening your door.