

by Mary Frances Dunham

TEACH YOURSELF TO BICYCLE IN NEW YORK CITY TRAFFIC

A MANUAL FOR BEGINNERS



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This manual is dedicated to Roger Herz in honor of his perseverance in impressing civic leaders with the fact that transportation bicycling in New York City merits their support and in gratitude for engaging me in this effort.

Pilot version, April 1992

Available from:

The Author  
212-472-9491

## PREFACE

Few people would say that New York City streets are safe for pedestrians and cyclists. Yet, in some ways, New York's streets are safer for them than suburban and country roads. Most of New York's layout conforms to a tightly knit grid with traffic lights at almost every intersection. This pattern provides street users, both motorists and non-motorists, with a self-regulating system of traffic control. Also, New York City motorists, unlike many drivers on country roads, generally expect (if not always respect) the presence of cyclists on city streets and they manage surprisingly well to avoid harming them.

Sadly, however, many New Yorkers -- motorists, pedestrians and cyclists alike -- abuse their given conditions. Pedestrians often "jaywalk", motorists and cyclists "run" red lights, and accidents occur. But once you become acclimatized to New York's traffic, once you know what to expect, you may find cycling on New York streets enjoyable rather than fearful, not to mention the pride that you may feel in getting about the city on your own "steam," at low cost and without causing wear and tear on your environment, neither locally nor globally.

This manual assumes that you already know how to cycle when you are away from traffic but that you are a beginner as far as cycling in traffic is concerned. The text suggests ways in which you can prepare yourself for in-traffic cycling by 1) testing your competency through off-bike exercises (Chapters II and III) and 2) performing on-bike exercises in a traffic-free area (Chapter IV). When the exercises and maneuvers in Chapters II through IV are too easy for you, Chapter V will suggest ways in which you can familiarize yourself with in-traffic cycling in gradual stages.

Much of the training suggested in this manual can also help wheelchair riders, joggers and roller-skaters/bladers, and other such "light" on-road travelers, provided that their speed is slow (i.e., averaging 5 mph). Training for high speed travel is beyond the scope of this manual.

Chapter I will introduce you to New York State laws of the road that are especially relevant to New York City conditions and to beginner on-street cyclists. Chapter VI provides the names and addresses of bicycling organizations that are knowledgeable about city cycling. In Chapter VII you will find a select list of publications that can provide more comprehensive and detailed information about cycling in general than can be included in this manual.

You are now invited to start your training.

Sincerely,

The Author, New York City, NY

April, 1992

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This manual is based primarily on the author's own experience gained from cycling in the traffic of many cities around the world. Thanks go to the author's husband and daughter for allowing such activity when it seemed risky.

The on-bike skills tests presented in Chapter IV are central to the method of learning recommended in this manual. The tests cited are based on events called "bicycle rodeos" that have proved to be an excellent tool for teaching school age children safe cycling habits. The author is grateful for Bikecentennial's manual on how to set up a bicycle rodeo (see Chapter VII) and for the opportunity to see a bicycle rodeo in action under the auspices of Officer Artie Johnson's bicycle safety program, Suffolk, Long Island. The author also gives thanks for the opportunity to stage bicycle rodeos in conjunction with Dr. Errol Toran's youth programs under the auspices of Transportation Alternatives. The author gives thanks for the interest taken in a bicycle safety course that the author ran under the auspices of the Girl Scouts with facilities at the Asphalt Green community center. John Benfatti, Bicycle Coordinator in the NYC Department of Transportation, answered the author's numerous questions with care, patience and humor.

Thanks are also due to the authors of several books and many articles in bicycling magazines and newsletters that have been written about safe cycling. Although few writings deal specifically with New York City, they contain matters that are fundamental to all cycling. The works of John Allen (Massachusetts), John Forester (California), John Williams (Montana) and Dan Burden (Florida) have been of special help. For several years John Overstreet has sent me monthly documents having to do with his bicycle safety education work in Maryland. These have been a great source of inspiration.

Thanks go to those who have encouraged the author to produce this manual and who have furnished valuable suggestions.

Sincerely,



The Author

New York City, NY  
April, 1992

## I. LAWS AND REGULATIONS

In New York State the same traffic laws apply to cyclists that apply to motorists, with a few obvious exceptions. Only laws and regulations that are especially relevant to cyclists in the early stages of learning to ride on New York City streets are included in this manual. Thus, laws are omitted that have to do with expressways, for example, or with bicycle equipment that is required for cycling at night.

The New York City Department of Transportation's traffic safety brochure that accompanies this manual provides laws and pointers that are of most concern to you as a city cyclist. The parts labeled for pedestrians and motorists are as useful to you as the parts intended specifically for cyclists. Kindly note the correction having to do with hand signals.

You should acquaint yourself as soon as possible with the main laws and pointers which are contained in the literature listed in Chapter VII. The New York State "Drivers' Manual," for instance, contains a section devoted to cyclists. A little handbook called "Sharing the Road; New York State Bicycle Laws" contains a readable summary of the State laws that apply to cyclists. Perfectionists may want to read the State of New York "Vehicle and Traffic Law" handbook. Chapter VII indicates where these works may be obtained.

The following laws are especially important:

1. Ride with the traffic flow, never against it.
2. Obey traffic lights: Move forward only on the green light, slow down on the yellow, and stop for the red light before reaching the pedestrian crossing lane.
3. Signal before you slow down, or stop or change direction. (See the diagrams in Chapter IV and the accompanying note.)
4. Do not cycle on the sidewalk (unless you are 12 years of age or under).
5. Wear a helmet. By the time this manual goes to press, wearing a helmet while cycling may be a law. If not, it is still wise for you to protect your head. (See Chapter IV.)
6. Your bicycle should be sturdy and equipped with at least one good brake.
7. Your bicycle should have a bell, horn or other device that can be heard from at least 100 feet away. (Sirens or whistles are not permitted.)

## II. OFF-BIKE TRAINING FOR STRENGTH AND COORDINATION

The terrain of NYC is so gentle and a bicycle is such an efficient machine that your muscles are probably already adequately strong for cycling the short stretches (under 5 miles) that you may do as a beginner on city streets. However, before you try the on-bike tests in Chapter IV, you should assess the extent of your physical strength through such off-bike exercises as suggested below and train your reflexes through the off-bike exercises suggested in Chapter III. Possessing the strength and coordination to do the off-bike exercises with ease will give you confidence in your ability to control your cycling in difficult situations as well as in easy ones.

At first, each exercise should be repeated only a few times at a time. If you can perform an exercise smoothly (without wobbling), try repeating it at a faster pace and for a longer time.

Exercises #1 - #4 should be performed while holding a stick or rod that is at least a foot long (e.g., a folded umbrella, yardstick, broomstick, etc.). Hold the stick in front of you with your hands about one foot apart, simulating holding the handlebars of a bicycle.

1. ANKLES: Alternate standing with feet flat on the ground with standing on tip-toe. Pause in the tip-toe position for about 10 counts before starting the exercise again.

2. LEGS: From a standing position with feet flat on the ground, bend your knees forward, lowering yourself as far as you can. You can let your heels come off the ground. Stand up slowly. Remember to keep your "handlebars" in front of you throughout.

3. ABDOMEN: a) Standing on your left foot, lift your right leg up as high as you can with your knee bent. Hold it there for ten counts. b) Do the same standing on your right foot while lifting your left leg. c) Repeat #3a and #3b lifting each leg in turn behind rather than in front of you.

4. ONE LEG BALANCE: a) Lift your right leg up as in exercise #3a. Holding your stick with your right hand, lift your left arm straight outwards at shoulder level from your side. Hold it there for 5 counts. Without putting your leg down, change hands and lift your right arm out to shoulder level and hold it there. b) Repeat the exercise standing on your right foot, holding your left leg up and performing the same arm motions. c) Repeat #4a and #4b, this time holding each leg in turn behind you.

5. ARMS: Put your stick away. Stand facing a wall with your toes about one foot away from it. Place your hands on the wall at chest level, fingers of each hand pointing towards each other. Bending your elbows, lean into the wall, then push yourself back to an upright position without bending at your waist.

### III. OFF-BIKE TRAINING FOR SCANNING AND SIGNALING

The following off-bike exercises will help to train your ability to keep cycling on course while looking around yourself or performing hand signals. When you can do an exercise faultlessly and with ease, try to perform it at a faster pace.

1. **HEAD AND NECK FLEXIBILITY:** Take up your stick as in Chapter II. Standing with your feet about 6 inches apart, turn your head to the left and look over your left shoulder, then turn your head to the right and look over your right shoulder. Repeat this exercise while leaning forward.

2. **BODY FLEXIBILITY:** Standing with your feet about 6 inches apart, twist your upper body to the left and look over your left shoulder, then twist your body to the right and look over your right shoulder. You should hold your stick still, so that it does not follow your upper body when it turns.

3. **COORDINATION IN PLACE:** While marching in place, lifting your knees high as you do so, look over your shoulders alternately as in exercises #1 and #2. Repeat this exercise while jogging in place with knees lifted high.

4. **COORDINATION WHILE MOVING FORWARD:** March around a room, turning your head to the right and to the left, trying to see what is behind you without interrupting your marching and without going off course. Repeat this exercise while jogging around a room.

5. **SIGNALING WITH THE LEFT ARM AND HAND.** a) Standing still, look back over a shoulder to see what is behind you. Then face forward and indicate a **LEFT TURN** by taking your left hand off your stick, stretching your left arm out to the side, and pointing to the left. Return your hand to the stick. b) Glance behind you again. Then indicate a **RIGHT TURN** by taking your left hand off the stick and raising it to ear level with the palm forward and with your arm bent at the elbow. Return your hand to the stick. c) Glance behind you again. Then indicate a **STOP** by removing your left hand from the stick and holding it diagonally downwards at your side, palm facing back. d) Repeat #5a - #5c in combination with marching and jogging around a room, signaling before turns and stops. Remember to glance behind you before signaling. Practice glancing over your other shoulder, not always the same one.

6. **SIGNALING WITH THE RIGHT ARM AND HAND.** a) Standing still, glance over a shoulder to see what is behind you. Then indicate a **RIGHT TURN** by taking your right hand off your stick and raising your right arm outwards from your side to shoulder level and pointing to the right. Return your hand to the stick. b) Glance over a shoulder again. Then indicate a **LEFT TURN** by taking your right hand off the stick and raising it to ear level, palm facing

forward, holding your arm bent at the elbow. Return your hand to the stick. c) Glance behind you again. Then indicate a **STOP** by taking your right hand off the stick and pointing your arm and hand diagonally downward, palm facing towards the back. Return your hand to the stick. d) Repeat #6a - #6c in combination with marching or jogging around a room, signaling before the turns and stops. Remember to glance behind you before signaling. Practice glancing over your other shoulder, not always the same one.

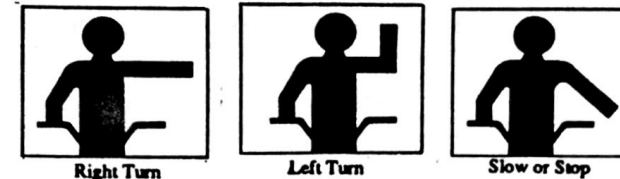
7. **SIGNALING ALONG A COMPLEX PATH:** Plan a path around a room with furniture or with markers on the floor so that your route includes right and left turns and a few stops. March along this pre-planned path, still holding your stick with both hands ahead of you. Give the appropriate signals for turns and stops well before you come to the actual turn or stop. First go through the path signaling with only your left arm and hand. Go through it again signaling with only your right arm and hand, but keep in mind an **IMPORTANT LEGALITY ABOUT THE RIGHT HAND** that is stated below the following diagrams. Practice this exercise starting at the opposite end of your path. Practice glancing over your other shoulder, not always the same one.

**HAND SIGNALS** (Diagrams depict cyclist's back.)

Left hand



Right hand (To be used only for coordination practice. Only the first signal may be used in traffic.)



Note: According to current New York State law, if you wish to use your right hand, it may may be used only for signaling a right turn, not for signaling a left turn or for stopping. However, the ability to do all the signals as shown above with either hand is an excellent test of balance and coordination.

#### IV. ON-BIKE SKILLS TESTS OUTSIDE OF TRAFFIC

Before you try riding in traffic, you should master basic cycling maneuvers. You can train yourself by practicing the on-bike tests below in a place free from traffic -- a parking lot, playground, unfrequented park path, etc.

The tests below derive from an event called a "bicycle rodeo," a kind of obstacle course designed to teach children safe cycling habits. The tests may look easy, but many cyclists who thought themselves competent have tried the tests and have found that they were surprisingly difficult to perform smoothly. Only when you feel you can do the tests with ease and elegance -- when their maneuvers become second nature to you -- should you feel ready for your first acquaintance with cycling on streets in traffic.

While you are in training, you should use a bicycle that is slightly too small for you. Depending on your height, even a child's model may do. Folding bicycles with small wheels are easy to adjust to different sizes. A bicycle that has a diagonal top tube, not a horizontal one, will enable you to get on and off easily. Adjust the seat height so that you can put both feet flat on the ground from a sitting position. The handlebars should be such that you can sit upright, holding the grips with your hands at waist height or higher. (If your bicycle has racing handlebars, you can turn them upwards or get a mechanic to do it). Be sure that your bicycle has at least one well functioning brake.

You will need 6 MARKERS. Bottle tops, books, sponges, etc. will do. If the paving is smooth, you can use chalk marks instead.

Practicing the tests is fun in itself, but it is more so if you have company for competition or for helpful critiques.

Only a few tests are presented here, but they suffice to suggest to you how to invent others of your own. It is important that you learn to be self-critical. Your safety in traffic will depend to a large extent on how well you know your strengths and weaknesses and how well you have developed the ability to gauge your speed and to control it.

1. BALANCING AT SLOW SPEED (2 markers): This test which looks to be the simplest is actually one of the hardest to perform. Place two markers about 60 feet apart. Cycle in a straight line from one marker to the other without wavering, taking at least 30 seconds to do so. Less time means that you were going too fast.

2. BALANCING WHILE CIRCLING (1 marker): Place a marker on the ground. Cycle around it at a radius of about 14 feet without wobbling or swerving. Practice riding the circle both clockwise and counterclockwise. As this test becomes easy for you, increase your speed.

3. BALANCING WHILE LOOKING BACK (1 marker as in #2): As you go around the circle in the above exercise, practice looking behind you. If you have a companion, he or she can hold up a number of fingers after you have gone by. Look back and see if you can count them. If you have no one to do this, find an object that you can look at after you have passed it. Be sure you practice looking over your left shoulder as well as over your right one.

4. REVIEWING SIGNALING (No marker): Without cycling, review the hand signals described in Chapter III. For the sake of attaining dependable control of your bicycle, aim to be fluent at signaling the three types of signals with either hand, even though New York State law mandates signaling mostly with your left hand. (See the note at the end of Chapter III.) Remember to look behind you before signaling.

5. BALANCING WHILE SIGNALING (1 marker as in #2): Cycle around the circle as in test #2. As you go around, practice signaling left and right turns with both hands. Glance behind you before signaling.

6. BALANCING AND BRAKING (1 marker as in #2): Cycle around the circle as in test #2. At random intervals, come to a full stop by first looking behind you, then signaling that you will stop, and then slowing down by squeezing the brake levers. As you squeeze them, push your body weight slightly backwards. When the bicycle comes to a full stop, practice staying on the seat as long as you can before you put a foot down to keep from tipping. A companion is useful in this exercise for calling out "Stop!" at unexpected moments.

7. TURNING AND MORE SIGNALING PRACTICE (6 markers): Place 6 markers in a straight line at a distance of about 12 feet from each other. Practice cycling in and out of the markers (slalom style) from one end of the row to the other and back again. Stay as close to the markers as you can without touching them. When the exercise becomes easy at slow speed, try the test at a faster speed, but only if you can do it smoothly. Repeat this test, practicing the proper signals for each change in direction with only your left hand. Then practice signaling with only your right hand. For this test, omit glancing back before signaling. Practice your signaling while doing the slalom at a greater speed.

8. MORE OF THE SAME (6 markers as in #7): Reduce the distance between the markers of the previous test to 6 feet or less, provided that you can manage the sharper turns that you will have to make. Omit signaling with this test, but aim to perform it gracefully as well as correctly. When it seems too easy, try doing the test faster.

9. SIMULATING STREET MANEUVERS (6 markers): Place 6 markers with about 30 feet between them as indicated in the diagram below. Notice the pattern of the route you are to follow and think about what hand signals you will use, including the STOP signal before

the end. Practice cycling the entire route in both directions, stopping at the ends and using only your left hand for signaling. Occasionally use your right hand for signaling a right turn. Remember to glance behind you before signaling and signal at least 3 seconds in advance of turning or stopping. When you can do this test with ease at slow speed (about 5 mph), try it at a faster speed.



x = marker (Markers should be about 30' from each other.)  
 ↑ = time to signal

10. GRADUATION: When you can perform all of the above exercises smoothly while carrying (or imagining that you are carrying) a bag of loose, raw eggs hanging from your handlebars without breaking any, you are ready for your first trial runs in traffic.

## V. ON-BIKE TRIAL RUNS IN TRAFFIC

EXPERIENCE is your best teacher for safe cycling in traffic, but you should acquire it gradually. First practice on crosstown streets where and when they contain little or no traffic activity. Cycle for only a block at a time, walking your bicycle for crossing streets and avenues. When such practice becomes too easy, try riding around an entire block, following the one-way signs correctly and walking your bicycle for crossings. Glance frequently behind you. When you feel ready, try riding along an avenue for several blocks.

Following behind a veteran city cyclist is another way to break yourself gradually into city cycling, but trying to keep up behind someone else in traffic can be dangerous. Moving on your own in traffic is actually a more effective way to become acquainted with it. If you are new to New York, it may take as much as two years for you to experience the wide variety of potentially hazardous situations in the city and to learn how to deal with them effectively. Long time New Yorkers may naturalize more quickly.

Below, you will find only a few of many possible directives. They have been chosen for their special relevance to the first stage of learning to cycle in traffic.

USE A BICYCLE THAT IS IN GOOD CONDITION and easy for you to handle. (See Chapter IV.) Cyclists may tell you that the LOW SEAT POSITION does not allow your legs to extend for efficient pedaling. Do not listen to them. You are not ready to pedal at speeds where you need efficiency. It is more important for you in the early stages to be able to put your feet down solidly on the ground when you have to stop suddenly.

WEAR A "BELL" OR "ANSI" TESTED HELMET. Be sure it fits you snugly and that the strap is secure.

WEAR SHOES WITH RUBBER SOLES for good adherence to your bike pedals. Do not wear toe clips.

FASTEN DOWN ANY LOOSE PARTS OF YOUR CLOTHES that may catch in your bicycle or on a protuberance near you.

KNOW THE TRAFFIC LAWS (See Chapter I.) You may be forced to break a law to avoid an accident in a complex situation, but only in the rarest of circumstances.

REVIEW THE EXERCISES IN CHAPTERS II - IV, perfecting your performance and confirming your mastery of them.

CYCLE SLOWLY (average 5 mph, as if you were jogging). In this way you can stop suddenly and avoid impacts, or, if you can't avoid an impact, it will be a minor one. Cycling slowly may take

patience, but until you are a seasoned city cyclist, you should limit your speed conscientiously.

LOOK BEHIND YOU FREQUENTLY; i.e., every few seconds.

BE "GOLDEN". Behave towards others in traffic as you would have them behave towards you. Be prepared, however, for neighboring vehiculists and pedestrians who may not see you or who may not be as law abiding as you are.

BE PREDICTABLE. For this you should:

a) BE CONSPICUOUS. Especially from the waist up, wear clothing that contrasts in color with the scene around you. Neon-like colors are excellent. If you are wearing dark clothes, put something brightly colored around your upper body.

b) THINK AHEAD about your next move; i.e., do not slow down suddenly or stop or change direction without warning the traffic around you. SIGNAL or at least MAKE EYE CONTACT with persons near you, especially anyone behind you.

DO NOT RIDE AT DANGEROUS TIMES; i.e., at night, in inclement weather or if you are in a hurry. If you are in a hurry to get somewhere, you will be tempted to take risks that may result in accidents. Practice your traffic riding on short trips in good weather, in the daytime and when you are not in a hurry.

RIDE ON THE OUTSIDE OF TRAFFIC until you are a seasoned city cyclist. In New York City, you may ride on the left side of a one-way street or avenue that is 40 feet or more in width (e.g., Fifth Avenue). The left side is generally safer than the right side of such avenues; there is less chance of car doors opening in your path and generally no stop-and-go buses.

WATCH OUT FOR CAR DOORS OPENING IN YOUR PATH. Ride slowly when approaching parked cars. If a door opens in front of you, you will be able to stop before a collision.

WALK YOUR BICYCLE ON THE SIDEWALK when there is an OBSTRUCTION that you have to circumvent (e.g., double parked cars that you can't ride between or construction work). Even when you are on a sidewalk, you can learn a lot about traffic behavior.

WALK YOUR BICYCLE when you have to make a LEFT TURN FROM A RIGHT LANE or a RIGHT TURN FROM A LEFT LANE. Stop, dismount, and walk your bicycle from curb to curb using the pedestrian crossing lanes. Be sure to signal stops and to cross only on green lights.

DON'T EXPECT TO BE ALWAYS VISIBLE. Especially truck/bus/taxi drivers have "blind spots". Keep making "eye contact" with drivers and pedestrians around you.

STAY ALERT. Although you may acquire a "sixth sense" about most common hazards, you cannot count on your reflexes to be ready for

them all. Train yourself to perceive unusual sights and sounds without being distracted by them. Train yourself to control your emotions such as euphoria when coasting downhill with a clear path or anger if someone near you breaks the law, etc. Being distracted by external events or what goes on in your head can leave you prey to an accident.

TRAIN YOURSELF TO RESIST TEMPTATIONS TO TAKE RISKS, even seemingly small and innocent ones. Don't let travelers near you pressure you into taking a risk.

KNOW THE LIMITATIONS OF YOUR BICYCLE and of your control over it. Develop your own mental speedometer. If you cycle at a speed beyond the speed at which you can stop your bicycle abruptly, you are at risk of being involved in an accident. (E.g., you may hit a hidden bump or an oil slick or collide with a vehicle or pedestrian crossing your path unexpectedly.)

OBSERVE THE COMMON MOTIONS OF VARIOUS TYPES OF VEHICLES. Especially if you are new to New York City, you should watch how and when vehicles such as buses, taxis and trucks go to park, pick up or leave off passengers, pull out from the curb, make turns into crosstown streets, etc. In this way you can anticipate what the drivers of these vehicles generally want to do and adapt your cycling speed and path accordingly. For instance, follow behind a bus for about ten blocks to see how it "behaves" (but do not attempt to pass it) or stand on a sidewalk near a department store to watch how taxis and limousines pull in and out of the curb.

WATCH FOR PEDESTRIANS. Be prepared to handle frequent instances of "jay-walking" and of pedestrians crossing in mid block.

REMEMBER YOUR "CLOSE SHAVES". You will inevitably have some near accidents while you are still acquiring city street experience. Analyze to yourself what went wrong and store such experiences vividly in your memory. In this way you may avoid having real accidents for which you might be at fault, even if only slightly. At home, think about possible situations and how you would handle them. For example, suppose a car door is opening on your left and a large truck is about to pass you closely on your right. What should you have done to avoid this situation to begin with? What should you do when it occurs? There is no one correct answer to such questions because several factors may complicate a particular situation, but thinking in advance about how to handle common hazards will help you to make wise decisions when you have to make quick ones.

GRADUATION: Training for riding at speeds greater than 5 mph and for riding in central lanes of traffic is beyond the scope of this manual. The textbooks listed in Chapter VII may help you get started on these more advanced stages.

## VI. HELPFUL ORGANIZATIONS

1. LOCAL: The Five Borough Bicycling Club and Transportation Alternatives offer instruction in bicycle repair and maintenance. Note also the organizations that publish newsletters. These contain useful ideas relevant to cycling in the city and dates for special events and rides.

Office of the Bicycle Coordinator  
New York City Department of Transportation  
40 Worth Street  
New York, NY 10013 212-566-0741

Transportation Alternatives  
92 St. Mark's Place  
New York, NY 10009 212-475-4600

CITY CYCLIST (6 issues/year, membership: \$20.00/year)

The Five Borough Bicycle Club  
c/o The New York International AYH Youth Hostel ("AYH")  
891 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, NY 10025 212-932-2300

BICYCLETTER (8 issues/year, subscription: \$10/year. Full club membership: \$10 + current AYH pass/year)

The New York Cycle Club  
P.O. Box 199  
Cooper Station  
New York, NY 10276 212-242-3900

THE NEW YORK CYCLE CLUB BULLETIN (12 issues/year, membership \$17.00/individual, \$23/couple)

2. NATIONAL: Note that membership in the organizations includes newsletters/magazines and members may call for information on specific questions.

BIKECENTENNIAL. Publications: 1) "BikeReport" (9 times yearly, including "The Cyclists Yellow Pages" and "The Cyclosource Catalog", emphasis on touring, membership \$22/year) and 2) "Bicycle Forum" (4 times yearly, emphasis on bicycle advocacy and planning, \$14.95/year). Bikecentennial, P.O. Box 8308, Missoula, MT 59802. 406-721-1776.

The BICYCLE FEDERATION OF AMERICA. Publication: "Pro Bike News" (12 times yearly, emphasis on advocacy, inclusion of "Pedestrian Federation of America News", \$30/year). Bicycle Federation of America, 1818 R St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. 202-332-6986.

The LEAGUE OF AMERICAN WHEELMEN. Main publication: "Bicycle USA" (8 times yearly, features include touring, current cycling issues and trends, etc., \$25/year for individual membership). The League of American Wheelmen, 190 W. Ostend Street, Suite 120, Baltimore, MD 21230. 410-539-3399.

The BICYCLE NETWORK. Publications: 1) "Network News," reprint of articles written in the U.S.A and around the world about bicycle transportation and pedal technology (4 issues/year, membership \$25/year/individual) and 2) an illustrated calendar (\$7.00 postage paid) and 3) various flyers on particular topics included in the "Network News" mailings. Bicycle Network, P.O. Box 8194, Philadelphia, PA 19101. 215-222-1253.

## VII. HELPFUL PUBLICATIONS

### 1. NEW YORK STATE HANDBOOK AND DOCUMENTS

"Sharing the Road; New York State Bicycle Laws." The Statewide Bicycle Advisory Council. Available free from The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, NYS Department of Motor Vehicles, Empire State Plaza, Core 1, Room 414, Albany, NY 12228 (518-473-3662) and from the Bicycle Coordinator, NYC Department of Transportation, 40 Worth Street, New York, NY 10003 (212-566-0751).

The following documents may be found in the main branch of the New York Public Library in the Economics and Public Affairs Section, Room 228, 5th Avenue and 42nd Street, as well as at the Department of Motor Vehicles, 141-155 Worth Street, New York, NY 10013 (212-645-5550):

"Driver's Manual." The New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. Available free from the Department of Motor Vehicles at the above address.

"Vehicle and Traffic Law." The New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. Available for \$1.00 from the Department of Motor Vehicles at the above address.

### 2. BICYCLING TEXTBOOKS

Allen, John S. "Street Smarts; Bicycling's Traffic Survival Guide," 2nd printing, Rodale Press, Emmaus, Pennsylvania, 1989. Available from Michelle Gisolfi, Rodale Press, 33 East Minor Street, Emmaus, PA 18098 (617-891-9307).

Forester, John. "Effective Cycling," MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1984. Available from The League of American Wheelmen, 190 W. Ostend Street, Suite 120, Baltimore, MD 21230 (301-539-3399).

The League of American Wheelmen. "Share the Road," brochure, 1990. Available at The League of American Wheelmen, 190 W. Ostend Street, Suite 120, Baltimore, MD 21230 (301-593-3399).

Tracy, Linda and Williams, John. "The Basics of Bicycling," seven-lesson manual and video tape. Available through The bicycle Federation of America, 1818 R St., NW, Washington, D.C., 20009 202-332-6986.

HAVE YOU ANY REMARKS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE?

Dear reader:

The author welcomes your comments and suggestions concerning the manual. Please feel free to call 212-472-9491 or 212-628-5963 any day before 9 p.m.

# Tips for safe bicycling



- **Be Predictable.** Never change lanes or turn without scanning ahead, to the side, and to the rear. Use hand signals when ever possible. Bicyclists can use either hand to signal.
- **Be Practical.** Whenever possible, avoid heavily congested two-way streets and complicated intersections.
- **Be Conspicuous.** Never take it for granted that you are seen. Use your horn, bell, voice, eyes and body. Wear high visibility accessories (i.e. helmets, reflective tape and safety vests).
- **Be Confident.** Keep your bike in good working order. Know basic bike repair, carry the proper tools.

## Using Left Hand



Left Turn

## Using Right Hand



Left Turn

## Signals



Right Turn



Slow or Stop

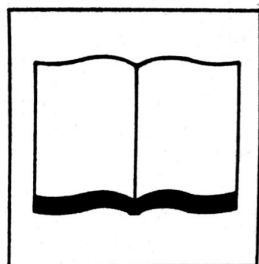


Right Turn



Slow or Stop

## It's the law



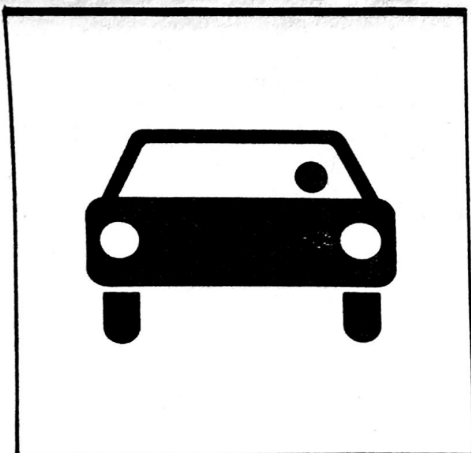
A bicycle is considered a vehicle. Its rider is a driver and must obey the same traffic laws as motorists. They are designed to keep you and your fellow travellers safe. If involved in an accident a cyclist must stop and give pertinent information. In addition, bicyclists have some specific regulations of their own (See the Bicyclists Should portion of this brochure). Drunk or drugged driving is illegal.

## Cooperation is the key

The streets of New York belong to everyone, and it is everyone's responsibility to keep our streets safe. Motorists must not block bike lanes or pedestrian crosswalks and pedestrians should not stand off the curb while waiting to cross the street. Bicyclists should yield to pedestrians. If everyone cooperates, the streets of New York will be safer. *Be a Good Will Ambassador.* Encourage safe and courteous interaction between bicyclists, motorists and pedestrians.



For additional copies  
mail a stamped self-  
addressed envelope to:  
New York City  
Department of Transportation  
Bicycle Coordinator  
40 Worth Street, Room 1035  
New York, New York 10013



# SHARING THE ROAD IN NEW YORK CITY

# Motorists Should



Motorists must be aware of the legal rights of others to use city streets. Exercise caution and courtesy toward pedestrians and bicyclists.

- obey all traffic signals, regulating signs and pavement markings.
- yield to bicyclists and pedestrians at all times, especially:
  - at intersections.
  - when turning, or when changing lanes.
  - when entering or leaving a parking space or driveway.
- never block a pedestrian crosswalk.
- never double park. It blocks the flow of traffic and it is illegal.
- respect bicyclists right to use the road.
- never block or travel in a bike lane (which is indicated by diamond shaped pavement markings, and bicycle signs).
- look for bicyclists to the right or the left on major one-way streets.
- never use headphones while driving- it's illegal.
- always use safety belts.
- give bicyclists at least three feet clearance. They may swerve to avoid obstacles.
- use moderate speeds for safe stopping and when passing a bicyclist.
- as drivers of taxis and commercial vehicles, take care to stop where they least obstruct vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic.
- never accelerate when approaching a red light.
- always use directional signals, even when changing lanes.
- watch for bicyclists when opening car doors into traffic.

# Bicyclists Should



A bicycle is considered a vehicle and governed by the same laws as a motorist. A bicyclist is subject to the same fines for violations of the laws.

- obey all traffic signals, regulating signs and pavement markings.
- ride with the traffic, never against it.
- yield to pedestrians.
- never block a pedestrian crosswalk.
- use bike lanes where provided unless they are blocked, unsafe or you are preparing for a turn.
- stay as far to the right as practical on two-way streets or narrow one-way streets.
- ride as far to the left or right as is practical on a one-way street wider than 40 feet.
- keep control of your bike. Construction plates get slippery on rainy days and sometimes shift from traffic.
- whenever possible, use hand signals when turning or stopping.
- ride no more than two abreast.
- never carry a passenger unless an attached seat is provided.
- never carry articles that interfere with proper control.
- always have at least one hand on the handle bars.
- never ride on the sidewalk unless you are 12 years or younger.
- never race or weave when riding is permitted on sidewalks
- never hang on to other vehicles.
- never use headphones while riding- it's illegal.
- never frighten other street users by riding erratically.
- never carry infants under one year old on a bicycle.
- always have helmets on children between one and four years old when carried as a passenger on a bicycle.

## Every bicycle must be equipped with:

- working brakes,
- a horn or a bell, ( Whistles are illegal and annoying.)
- white front and red rear lights when riding at night.

New bicycles must be sold with rear, front, and side reflectors.

# Pedestrians Should



Pedestrians should understand their rights and responsibilities and practice safe walking habits at all times.

- always remain on the sidewalk while waiting to cross the street.
- never cross the street between parked cars.
- never stand in a bike lane.
- cross the street only with the green or "WALK" light.
- never enter the crosswalk when the red "DON'T WALK" signal starts flashing.
- watch for turning vehicles when crossing at the green signal.
- cross the street only at corners or designated crosswalks.
- look both ways, even when crossing a one-way street.
- be defensive. Learn to watch for bicyclists and other vehicles. Do not follow the crowd when the light is against you.
- Remember, bicyclists and motorists could be turning into your path when you have the green light.
- never stand or walk in traffic lanes, especially those where vehicles or bicycles have priority.

Please SHARE This Brochure With Another Road User.

New York City Department of Transportation  
David N. Dinkins, Mayor    Lucius J. Riccio, Ph. D., P. E., Commissioner