

Bicycle Riding Behavior Types – It's not 'Comfort' - it's competence & confidence

It may be helpful to understand the **3 major types of bicycle owners**; the 4th drives their ATB by vehicle to dirt trails & avoids all traffic by mountain biking & the 5th has a bike in their garage or yard but never rides out of simple laziness or fear... the 6th are 'scofflaws' who cycle illegally or like loose animals...

- 1: Road Using:** Operate your bicycle legally as part of TRAFFIC
- 2: Edge Riding:** Riding near edge - in Bike Lane, gutter, out of traffic...
- 3: Side Walk Riding:** Use sidewalks & trails - pedestrian right of way...

#3: SIDEWALK RIDERS



Sidewalks are for pedestrians; Bicyclists who ride side walks risk:

>Safety of pedestrians there; must watch out for people in the way as they belong. Even Class I routes use side paths (wide sidewalks) and trails that are multi use & speed limits are posted at 5 to 10 MPH. Conflicts with other users & lack of

CVC application allows all sorts of shared use safety concerns.

>Temptation of riding against traffic; legal on side walk (as it is off the roadway where it is illegal), but deadly as motorists pulling out of drive ways & turning right watch oncoming traffic on their left - never see a bicycle coming fast on their right. Also every intersection is being crossed against rules of the road or against signals that do not face the wrong way rider. Some side walks end & that puts the bicyclist illegally riding on the street against traffic. It is worth the time to cross & use the other sidewalk that puts you riding WITH traffic.

>Hazards from obstacles like signposts, hydrants, utility boxes, light and utility poles. Poor visibility from motorists who can see traffic lanes, but may not see sidewalk traffic as well due to angles of sight & obstructions.

>Cross walk signals - when blinking red or counting down is too late; you are jay walking if you enter street - must wait (often a LONG time) for next green signal.

>Many cities have made it illegal to ride on sidewalks, many more in commercial or business districts where more pedestrians use the side walks. If you don't know each cities law you might not know (until cited) that you are breaking the local law.

Multi-use trails may be designated as Class I bike ways, but often have low speed limits, are not open after dark, and are shared with pedestrians, dog walkers, bird watchers, etc. Sidewalk riders love being on car free routes but do not always ride safely on trails. Keeping to the right, moving into single file, passing on the left, ringing a warning bell when passing, all help make trails safer.

Avoiding all of these risks slow down a bicyclist's speed of travel; you will get a lot farther in traffic when riding legally, as a road user – as if driving a vehicle. Staying on sidewalks may be appropriate (where legal) for most cautious and sensible bicyclists; but reckless riders put them selves and other side walks users at risk.

Separated Bikeways are now called Class IV bike ways; These “cycle-tracks” are a portion of a road, separated by various barriers from vehicle traffic. This sounds great to side walk riders. They are intended for cyclists, but will often be used by pedestrians crossing to parked cars, busses or just ignoring their side walk to stroll in the road. Some even have 2 way traffic and some are contra-flow, putting cyclists on the wrong direction of one way streets or on the wrong side of the street. The barriers keep most vehicles out, but cyclists are trapped & cannot merge out to pass as they can with a bike lane. Intersections require extensive engineering to not create conflicts with normal traffic and pedestrians. **Sidewalk Riding** [21950](#), [21952](#), [21954](#)

There is no state law prohibiting bicycling on sidewalks in California, many cities prohibit sidewalk bicycling throughout the city or in business districts. Pedestrians have the right of way in crosswalks (marked or unmarked) and on sidewalks. Bicyclists are also required to “exercise due care” for the safety of pedestrians in the roadway who are not in a crosswalk.

WITH traffic & on Shoulder ONLY if safe [21650](#)

Upon all highways, a vehicle [or bicycle] shall be driven **upon the right half of the roadway**, except ...when overtaking and passing another vehicle ...under the rules governing that movement or...when ...in a lawful position for, and when ... lawfully making, a left turn; Or when the right half of a roadway is closed to traffic under construction or repair; Or ...restricted to one-way traffic; Or when the roadway is not of sufficient width; Or when the [bicycle] is ... traveling so slowly as to impede the normal movement of traffic, that portion of the highway adjacent to the right edge of the roadway **may be utilized temporarily when in a condition permitting safe operation**. This section does not prohibit the operation of bicycles on any shoulder of a highway, on any sidewalk, on any bicycle path within a highway, or along any crosswalk or bicycle path crossing, where the operation is not otherwise prohibited by this code or local ordinance.

#2a : EDGE RIDERS

Edge Riding is encouraged by misinterpretation of the "Far To Right" law - Bicyclists are legally *expected* to be in traffic lanes **UNLESS it is practicable to ride to the right**, sharing their lane with faster vehicles. If the lane is too narrow to safely share (safe from the bicyclist's point of view) or if there are hazards (trash, bad pavement, storm grates, parked cars, etc.) the bicyclist is expected to stay in the lane; and motorists can slow down, signal & pass the bicyclist safely. Ignorance of this fact results in motorist expecting bicyclists to keep out of their way - and bicyclists to take unnecessary risks by always riding on the edge:



- > Broken glass and other debris can cause flat tires or lost control -
- > The joint between the asphalt street & concrete gutter always expands & separates – or is not slurry sealed evenly making a hazard to cyclists

- > Storm drains offer grates and gutter angles that provide hazards

- > Shoulders are legal to ride as an option, but not required, as they typically have poor surface maintenance and put riders out of normal line of sight. Bike lanes are NOT shoulders.

- > Less visible to motorists pulling out into a roadway - as motorists focus on oncoming traffic lanes and obstructions, landscaping or signs can easily hide a bicyclist approaching near the gutter.

- > Riding near parked cars is called the 'door zone'. Opening a door into a bicyclist in traffic is illegal, and has killed bicyclists.

- > Riding in & out of parked cars is not predictable and can surprise a passing motorist.

- > Encourages filtering; the habit of passing traffic on the right, often at a fast speed & with no room for avoiding a right hook or squeeze from a motorist who may or may not use a blinker to signal turning right into a drive way before a corner.

- > Encourages wrong way 'salmon' riding; If riders get comfortable riding the gutters, then riding gutters against traffic seems almost as safe, even though illegal & obviously a problem when other edge riders riding with traffic, and

when coming from the wrong side when motorists pull out of drive ways or cross streets.

- > Invites unsafe passing by motorists – even those who know about the 3 Feet for Safety passing law, are invited to squeeze past edge riders – some times not making it past without touching or frightening the edge rider.

- > **Edge of Roadway** is defined in the following order: edge line (white line at right edge); if there is no white line, the gutter seam; if there is no gutter, the curb face; if there is no curb, the edge of the part of pavement used for vehicular travel. The edge line separates the roadway from the shoulder--no matter how wide the shoulder, it is not part of the roadway and it does not count toward the width of the travel lane.

#2b : BIKE LANE RIDERS

Bike Lanes are legal designated use lanes of the road that reinforce edge riding - but that causes risks: If a Class 2 bikeway is established, in many areas of Orange County they are too narrow, signed incorrectly and end before intersections, failing to show where to ride, often leaving people confused (motorists and cyclists alike).



- > Right Turn lanes:

Most Bike Lanes simply disappear before a right turn lane, leaving no clues for traffic to follow the basic rules of the road.

Some follow the gutter, putting the bicyclist going straight in conflict with the turning motorists or trapping them. Some do so turning into a narrow shoulder (like PCH @ Newport Coast & Dover)

Some continue with a narrow bike lane in between the through and the right turn lanes. Some even have a dashed bike lane & signs so motorists will safely yield to the bicyclist.

Bicyclist going straight should safely leave the bike lane (signal & look back!) before the turn lane & merge with the through lane & will find the bike lane across the intersection.

It is illegal for a car or bicycle, to go straight from a right turn lane. If the bike lane is not extended, bicyclists should move over to the through lane & get out of the right turn lane.

- > No Right Turn Lane:

Many motorists break the law by not merging into a bike lane to turn right from as close to the edge / curb as possible. (Irvine confuses motorists by being the only city in OC to use BIKE ONLY instead of BIKE LANE in bike lanes.)

That causes deadly 'right hooks' where motorists turn from the through lane in front of bicyclist going straight. Motorists (and bicyclists) do not know that they SHOULD use the bike lane in the last 200 feet before a corner to make a right turn. That is why the bike lane line gets dashed before most intersections (and in cities that save paint, before every drive way). Bicyclist should know that & be prepared for merging or following motorists and when safe, signal and leave the bike lane at every corner to free up the bike lane for right turning motorists. It also reduced the temptation of 'filtering' up on the right of traffic.

>Left Turns: It is dangerous and illegal to turn left across traffic from the right side of the road, but Edge & Bike Lane riders often make this move. Safely (Signal, look & merge) move across to the left & ride in traffic OR at a signal, use cross walks to make a 'boxed turn' - keeping on the right & stopping, then shifting direction and continuing on the right effecting a left turn.

When the vehicular traffic is faster than the bicyclist, and there are no hazards or parked cars or slower bicyclists or joggers in the Bike Lane, or a right turn coming up or you are not turning left you MUST ride in the Bike Lane. Otherwise, when the bike lane is hazardous, conflicted with right turns, and traffic is slow enough to join, or you need to turn left, bicyclists should leave the Bike Lane & ride in the traffic. At that time you will need to know about Bicycle Driving.

#1: ROAD USERS



Bicycle Driving: Many cyclists prefer the advantages of using the roads with other traffic. When there is no bike lane, side path or it is not legal to ride the sidewalk, bicyclist have no choice but to share their road with motorists. Avoiding all of the hazards of Edge Riding, the added benefit of being in the lane is increased visibility to the motorist approaching from behind, giving plenty of time to slow, signal &

change lanes to safely pass. More streets will be having Sharrows painted and BMUFL signs posted on them as reminders of the existing law. Sharrows are a stenciled bike and chevron painted in the middle of the right most traffic lane to show where bicyclists are safest to ride in traffic. Usually reserved for bike routes using narrow lanes that are unsafe to share side by side, and at 35 MPH or slower. Signs that say **Bikes May Use Full Lane** remind road users of the existing law and are designed to reduce risky edge riding by bicyclists and arrogant lane ownership & dangerous 'Right of Speed' behaviors by motorists. The law requires road users to obey painted arrows on the road; It is illegal to go straight from a right turn only lane. It expects all road users to use a left turn

only lane; safely signaling, looking back and merging across to the right-most left turn pocket; holding the lane & making the left when legal (most signals will pick up a bicycle & give you a green light if you stop behind the limit line as required by law. Being impatient & running a left turn against the red is a \$490 citation in a car or with a bike.) Staying on the right edge of the left turn lane, or on the left edge of the through lane is very risky. Being in the lane means NOT filtering up on the right, but waiting in turn behind motorists in a predictable legal way. Filtering up on the right of cars waiting to turn left only puts you at risk & slows the motorists trying to make the left; everyone gets through faster when bicycles 'drive' with vehicles.

Safely using the roads and following of the CVC - by all users, human powered or motorized, really does work. Most accidents are caused by bicyclists not following the basic rules of the road and CVC. Bicyclist must know all of the CVC rules of traffic PLUS the additional CVC rules for Bicycles and Bike Lanes. As more people purchase e-bikes or are inspired by racing to buy road bicycles, the ignorance of or failure to comply with the CVC is obvious to all traffic users. Beach communities and college campuses are often a hub for local short distance beach cruisers who ride like loose animals, oblivious to the rules or risks of riding on the street.

Road Using Bicycle Driver Education classes are a great investment in understanding traffic safety from a bicyclist's perspective. Bicycle Driving skills are taught very well by the American Bicycling Education Association's CyclingSavvy program and the League of American Bicyclists' Smart Cycling program. It is a great investment in understanding traffic safety from a cyclist's perspective. Bicyclists, e-Bicyclists and motorists who care about bicycling neighbors should take the time to take the class or do some reading & practice the skills of legal bicycle driving.

Driver's Education for Cycling:
cyclingsavvy.org/



For traffic cycling information and courses, visit CyclingSavvy.org
For more information about bicycle driver rights and laws, visit iamtraffic.org

bikeleague.org/content/find-take-class



Places to get more info on being "Veloquent":



OCBike.org
BikeIrvine.org



Visibility Gear: It has become obvious that motorists driving among cyclists are distracted, impaired, or just attending traffic in their lane, not cyclists on the edge. Being inconsequential is as good as being invisible to motorists. Edge riding and Bike Lanes put cyclists out of the line of sight to motorists with tragic consequences. Good lane position



– IN the travel lane – makes us most visible. In addition to lane position, being EXTRA visible may give motorists a better chance to notice you: The CVC has requirements for your bicycle regarding reflectors and lights at night. These are MINIMAL. Experienced Bicycle Drivers make choices to exceed them. If you might get caught after dark, or plan to ride after dusk, a head lamp that effectively lights up your path is better than the required visible white light. Reflectors are required but many choose to add red rear tail lights day (flashing) and night (steady), front facing white LED flashers day and night & extra reflectors & reflective clothing. The DMV recommends Hi-Vis & reflective clothing at night, but many choose to wear Hi-Vis clothes or vests at any time rather than ‘flattering’ black & fashionable dark clothes that may help being seen by a motorist.

Helmets do not magically make you safer having from crashes, but if you crash and hit your head, brain damage is often reduced and helmets have saved lives. Helmets are required for minors under 18 on Bicycles, including eBikes, riding in bike carriers & trailers, on Skate Boards, Electric ‘hover board’ Skateboards, Scooters and roller skates including ‘heelies’ type shoes. Helmets are required for all riders of Type 3 (28 mph) eBikes.



Segregated Bike Ways & Special Facilities:

Until the 'Big One' levels Southern California and we can rebuild the rubble, we will never be able to emulate a Dutch model of segregated bike ways, free of pedestrians and cars, that will serve to get to any destination. Until then - even if streets are avoided when available Class I, II & IV bike ways are available - every



bicyclist really should learn to handle Road Using Bicycle Driving skills to understand the most challenging mile of any given ride. Special bike boxes & odd Class IV protected bike ways on roadways confuse the existing rules of the road and road users already do not know how to follow them. “Same rules for everyone” makes traffic work best in this author's experience & opinion.

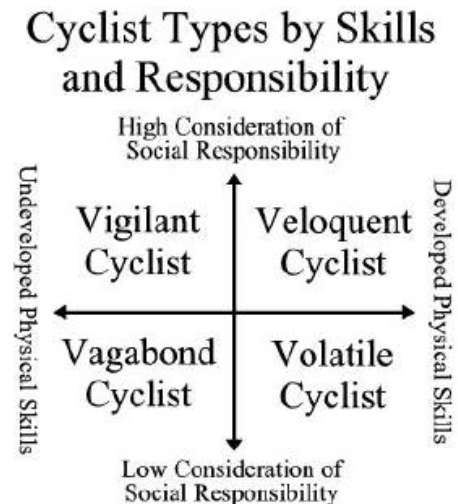
Electric Bicycles: Low Power e-Bikes are classified in 3 types and are bicycles, NOT “Motorized Bicycles” under the CVC. Type 1 have a pedal assist up to 20 mph; Type 2 have a throttle to go without pedaling up to 20 mph; Type 3 E-Bikes can reach 28 mph, require, helmets for all riders, (must be 16 to operate) and are prohibited on all Class I bike paths in California unless ‘adjacent to a road’. Type 1 & 2 E-Bikes *may* be prohibited by local ordinances from bike path use, like side walk use, but must be posted as prohibited.



A **Right of Speed** does not exist – **Right of Way** does – along with the Basic Speed Law, and Speed limits are MAXIMUM - not MINIMUM This applies to motorists and cyclists who like to go fast - risky behavior for self & others; Southern California is infamous for both, Sports Cars and Racing Bikes.... Volatile scofflaws and side walk racers... many bicyclists, of all types, also ride as if they have a **Right of Speed**.

This diagram illustrates the relationship between the development of cycling skills and the consideration of social responsibilities that result in for types of transportation cyclists.

Skills include the physical acts of controlling a bicycle and manoeuvring in traffic. Responsibilities are the consideration of social responsibility including physical requirements to ensure safety of self and others as well as social responsibilities of communication, courtesy and contribution.



Help, Questions, Advice –
Contact Bill @ Bill@BikeIrvine.org

“Most of the World is either Downhill or Flat...”