

A driving instructor's guide to safer driving in relation to... Cyclists

The AA has enjoyed a long association with cycling since the first patrols took to the road on their bicycles in 1905 and many of our staff, including AA President Edmund King, are enthusiastic cyclists. On today's roads however there is frequently a lack of tolerance, patience and understanding of the cyclist by drivers and vice-versa. Yet often the cyclist and the driver can be the same person - 80% of cyclists hold a driving licence and 1 in 5 drivers cycle at least once a month (National Travel Survey statistics, 2010). It is AA policy that there should be greater awareness by drivers of cycle safety and that this should be reflected in driver training and the driving test. To help AA Driving School pupils manage the transition from cyclist to driver we have developed this instructor's guide and pupil worksheet to promote discussion as part of the driving lessons around the main points of safety in relation to cyclists.



As a driving instructor you cover issues around the awareness and anticipation of other road users – pedestrians, busses, lorries, cars and of course cyclists – as they arise during the driving lessons. It is AA policy that at some point during those lessons you will spend time giving particular consideration to the safety of cyclists. This instructor's guide is to remind you of the main points that should be covered, in addition to responding to any issues or concerns your pupil raises through completing their worksheet.

Some 'dos' for drivers:

- Do expect cyclists in unexpected places – always check your door mirrors for cyclists especially before turning left or moving over to the left.
- Do hold back if you're uncertain as to the intention of another road user – including cyclists – rather than risk a wrong assumption.



- Do allow any cyclist ahead of you to pass a junction rather than overtake them and then turn sharply left across their front wheel.
- Do wait behind a cyclist turning right in the same way you would for a car – rather than squeezing past or getting impatient.
- Do give as much room as practically possible when overtaking a cycle - the Highway Code Rule 163 illustrates one car's width, roughly 2 metres. They may have to move out to avoid hazards like drains, potholes or debris on the road that you may not be able to see.



- Do look carefully for cyclists at all junctions. They may be travelling faster than you think (could be 20mph plus) so judge their approaching speed with care before pulling out at a junction.
- Do take special care on roundabouts. You must give way to any vehicle approaching from the right and that includes cyclists.
- Do take care on country roads. Match your speed to the conditions and make sure you will be able to stop well within the distance that you can see to be clear. There could be a group of cyclists, a horse rider or pedestrians around the next bend.
- Do use dipped headlights when approaching cyclists at night, as you would when approaching any other road user.
- Do allow cyclists extra room in wet weather as surfaces will be wet and slippery.

Some 'don'ts' for drivers:

- Don't overtake a cyclist if you can see that the road narrows ahead – if they're travelling faster than you think you could end up squeezing them off the road.
- Don't drive aggressively around cyclists or sound your horn.
- Don't drive into the 'advanced stop area' for cyclists at lights.
- Don't park in cycle lanes – you could be forcing a cyclist into a dangerous situation and will be committing a road traffic offence if you drive or park in a cycle lane marked with a solid white line.



Additional resources for further information:

- Highway Code rules 211 – 213 set out the rules car drivers should follow in regard to cyclists. The rules for cyclists are 59 – 82.
- Driving, the essential skills, page 217 has general advice for car drivers in regard to cycle safety. Pages 111 and 128 cover cycle lanes.
- The Official DSA Guide to Learning to Drive (pages 38 -39) sets out how anticipation and planning in regard to cyclists and other vulnerable road users will be tested and assessed during the driving test.
- The AA website has further advice for drivers and cyclists so that roads can be shared safely - visit theAA.com/motoring_advice/safety/cyclists-and-drivers-sharing-the-road

At the end of a driving lesson when cycle safety has been covered you should discuss their performance with your pupil and agree how you assess their ability on a scale of 1 – 5 on the progress chart. Only once you and your pupil agree that they would consistently achieve a '5' whenever they need to anticipate and plan in relation to the safety of cyclists should you regard the learning as complete.

Progress chart. Keep a record of safe driving performance in relation to cyclists				
1 Introduced	2 Full instruction	3 Prompted	4 Seldom prompted	5 Independent

