

## Key Points

- Bicycles are legitimate vehicles and cyclists have rights and responsibilities like any other road user.
- Before you (or your child) get on a bike, check that it is safe and complies with ACT Road Regulations.
- If you are unsure about your bicycle's safety, have it checked at a bike shop.

## 1. Bicycle Safety Check List

### Brakes

- An effective foot or hand operated rear wheel brake is required. A front brake is optional, but is strongly recommended

### Lighting

- A red reflector must be fitted to the rear
- When riding between sunset and sunrise or in hazardous weather, bicycles must also have a:
  - Front light showing an unbroken or flashing white beam that is clearly visible from 200 metres
  - Rear light showing an unbroken or flashing red beam that is clearly visible from 200 metres
- In addition it is advisable that when riding bikes at night or in poor weather they should have:
  - Yellow reflectors fitted to both sides of each pedal
  - Yellow side reflector (visible from both sides) on each wheel
- Before riding at night ensure the lights work properly

### Steering

- Make sure handlebars are not loose and are aligned with the front wheel axle. Riders must have at least one hand on the handlebars and have full control of the bike while in motion

### Child carrier seats

- Only approved child carrier seats can be attached to a bicycle and only at the approved point
- They must be securely attached to the frame
- Not forward of or on the handlebars
- Fitted with a footrest to prevent the child's feet from dangling into a moving bicycle wheel
- Fitted with a restraining device that cannot be accidentally released
- The child must wear an approved helmet
- It is strongly recommended that children under the age of 12 months NOT be carried in a carrier seat, because of immature spinal development. It is suggested that a child be at least 18 months old before using a carrier seat

### Warning devices

- Let other people know you are coming, especially on shared paths. However, keep in mind some people may have disabilities and may not always see or hear you
- The law requires a bell, horn or similar warning device. Please use it

### Bicycle trailers

- It is recommended that a cyclist towing passengers in a bicycle trailer should be at least 16 years of age
- The passengers should not be over the age of 10. A bicycle trailer must be designed so that it can safely carry the passenger
- The passenger must wear an approved helmet

### Bicycle racks on vehicles

- A bicycle rack attached to a motor vehicle and any bicycle attached to the rack must not obscure the rear number plate of the vehicle. Special number plates for racks are available from the Dickson Motor Registry
- It is recommended for safety that when the bike rack is not in use it be removed from the motor vehicle

### Clothing

- Bright, reflective clothing should be worn at all times. Avoid dull dark clothing even in day-time
- Reflective ankle and wristbands and reflective tape on panniers or backpacks also make it easier to be seen
- It is advisable to wear suitable footwear and protective eyewear

## 2. Road Rules/Sharing the Road

All paths, including "cycle paths" are Shared Paths, used by people riding bikes, walking, pushing prams, using roller blades or riding skateboards or scooters. It is important to keep in mind that all users have legitimate rights on shared paths, but that with rights come responsibilities. One responsibility for cyclists is to give way to pedestrians.

### Bicycle helmets

- Bicycle riders must wear an approved helmet in the ACT
- A child carried in a child carrier seat or a passenger in a trailer towed by a bicycle must also wear an approved helmet

### Hand signals

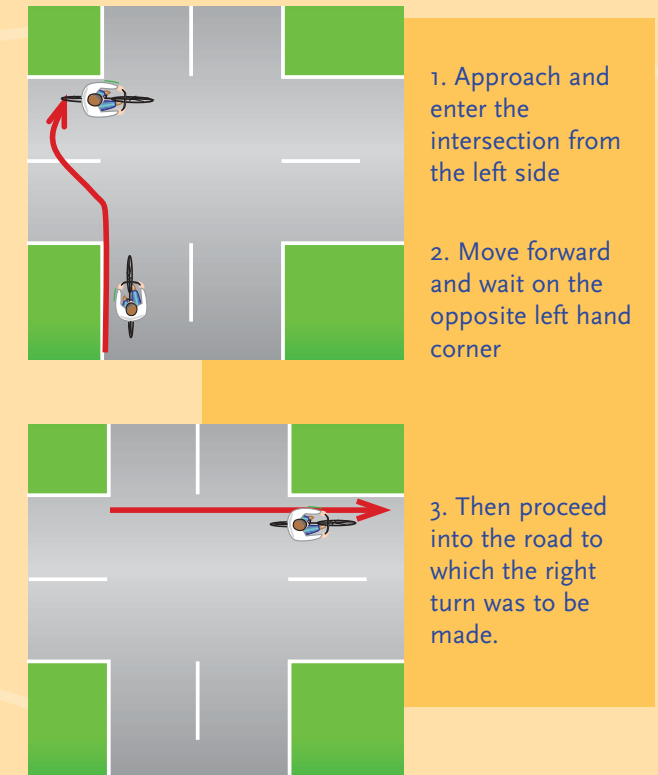
- Cyclists should give clear hand signals when about to turn left, right or changing lanes. Left turn hand signals are not mandatory but are recommended

### Multi-lane roundabouts

- Bicycle riders, like all riders and drivers entering a multi-lane roundabout, must give way to vehicles already on the roundabout and should look out for vehicles approaching the roundabout from the right
- You may turn right from either lane of a multi-laned roundabout. However, if you are riding in the left lane you must give way to any vehicle leaving the roundabout from either lane. For maximum safety and visibility when using multi-laned roundabouts, it is recommended that you ride in the middle of a lane to discourage drivers attempting to overtake in the same lane

### Hook Turns

- When turning right at an intersection, cyclists have the option of making a hook turn, rather than making a normal right turn. A hook turn may be safer and more convenient on some roads, such as those with heavy traffic volumes
- When making a hook turn, you must still obey all traffic laws such as only proceeding on a green light and giving way to other traffic. You must complete the following steps as shown in the diagram;



### Riding abreast

- Cyclists are permitted to ride two abreast
- Three or more riders abreast are not permitted; however you can overtake two other riders cycling abreast

## Overtaking motor vehicles

- Cyclists cannot overtake on the left side of a motor vehicle if that motor vehicle is moving and indicating a turn left
- Cyclists are permitted to overtake on the left of motor vehicles that are stationary, at locations such as traffic lights

## Carrying passengers

- It is against the law to carry more passengers than the bicycle is designed to carry. Most bicycles are only designed to carry the rider. However there are exemptions including child seats, tandems and bicycle trailers

## Holding on to a moving vehicle

- It is against the law and dangerous in the extreme to 'hitch' a ride by holding on to a moving vehicle

## Slip streaming

- Slip streaming or pacing behind a moving vehicle is very dangerous, as the vehicle in front of you could suddenly stop

## Crossing at lights

- When riding on the road, cyclists as road users must obey traffic lights
- If cyclists are using a shared pedestrian/cycle path they must cross only at the 'Walk' pedestrian signal by walking (or by riding at intersections with 'Cycle' signals) or when the lights go green if the lights don't have specific 'Walk/Don't Walk' commands

## Pedestrian crossings

- Bike riders must not ride across a road by using children's school crossing or a zebra crossing. A rider wishing to cross at these points must walk the bicycle across

## Keeping left

- The 'keep left' rule applies to cyclists as it does to other vehicles

## Riding courtesy

- Show the same level of courtesy to all other road users (pedestrians, other cyclists and motorists) that you yourself expect. But most of all show common sense and caution, especially to motor vehicles, as they are bigger, faster, harder and a lot less vulnerable than you

## Giving way to buses

- If you are in the left lane, including a bicycle lane, give way to all buses that are indicating and trying to rejoin the traffic stream

## 3. Riding

### Shared paths/footpath/cycle paths

- It is permissible for cyclists to ride on footpaths in the ACT
- Show courtesy to other users, especially pedestrians. Remember that small children are unpredictable and older people may not see or hear you. Also remember that people may be walking dogs on leads. Give them a wide berth. Cyclists must give right of way to pedestrians, wheel chairs and motorised scooters used by people with disabilities. This might occasionally involve dismounting and walking the bike
- Cyclists should keep left where possible

### On the road

- Be predictable and signal your intentions clearly
- Expect the unexpected and ride carefully
- Be aware of road and traffic conditions
- Be assertive but not aggressive
- Be ready for drivers turning in front of you
- Be aware of dangers with merging traffic
- Be aware of vehicle slipstream, especially from heavy vehicles
- Whenever a bicycle lane is provided as part of a road and is in a reasonable condition for use, the rider should use that lane and not the remainder of the road

## At night/in bad weather

- Be seen! Be safe!
- In poor light or hazardous weather, use every device to increase your visibility, such as wearing bright clothing and switching on your lights. If you do not possess these items don't ride!
- Keep an extra sharp look out for other road users, especially pedestrians

## Accidents

- Any on-road cycle accident, especially involving injury or another party, should be reported to the police

## 4. Bicycle security

### Bicycle theft

- Stolen or vandalised bicycles should be reported to the police as soon as possible. Ensure your bicycle is security coded or identifiable in some way. Record the serial number of the frame and take a colour photo of the bike. A Bicycle Security form, which can be used for recording all the details of your bike, is available from the police or Pedal Power
- Use a security-locking device if you leave your bicycle unattended

## Useful Contacts

**Department of Urban Services** - search by using the keywords on [www.canberraconnect.act.gov.au](http://www.canberraconnect.act.gov.au) or call the ACT Government Hotline 13 ACT 1 (13 228 1)

- ACT Cycling Website - keywords - cycling information
- Department of Education - keyword - education
- Bicycle Safety Co-ordinator in PALM
- Roads ACT
- ACT Road Safety
- Dickson Motor Registry

**Australian Federal Police** - 6256 7777 or [www.afp.gov.au](http://www.afp.gov.au)

**Pedal Power** - 6248 7995 or [www.pedalpower.org.au](http://www.pedalpower.org.au)

**Australian Bike Council** - [www.dotrs.gov.au/abc](http://www.dotrs.gov.au/abc) or Secretariat (02)6274 6521

**Bike industry** - [www.bikeoz.com](http://www.bikeoz.com) or 03 9376 1255

**ACTION** - 13 17 10 or [www.action.act.gov.au](http://www.action.act.gov.au)

# ENJOYING SAFE CYCLING in the ACT



Photo: Alan Benson

© Australian Capital Territory 2008 02/104

This brochure is endorsed by the ACT Bicycle Liaison Group, which is made up of representatives from the community, industry and Government.