

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

[Home](#) [About the Ministry](#) [News](#) [Publications](#) [Contacts](#)

Bicycle Safety



Cycling is a fun and healthy activity, it's a low-cost way to get around, and it's good for the environment.

Before you head out on a bike, learn the rules of the road, helmet information and safety tips for cyclists of all ages.

Cycling guides

Learn more about safe cycling:

- [Cycling Skills: Ontario's Guide to Safe Cycling](#) (PDF - 9 MB) : a detailed handbook of rules and safety standards for any rider
- [Young Cyclist's Guide](#) (PDF - 2.83 MB) : a kid-friendly handbook book of cycling safety tips and rules for young riders

What is a bicycle?

A bicycle, or bike, is a vehicle that:

- has one, two or three wheels (a unicycle, bicycle or tricycle)
- has steering handlebars and pedals
- does not have a motor. For motor-assisted bikes, read about [electric bicycles](#) or [scooters and mopeds](#)

Licence and registration

Bicycles do **not** require:

- registration
- licence plates
- vehicle insurance
- a driver's licence

People of all ages can ride a bike.

Rules of the road

As a cyclist, you must share the road with others (e.g., cars, buses, trucks, motorcycles, etc.).

Under Ontario's *Highway Traffic Act* (HTA), a bicycle is a vehicle, just like a car or truck.

Cyclists:

- must obey all traffic laws
- have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers
- cannot carry passengers - if your bicycle is only meant for one person

Riding on the right

You must stay as close to the right edge of the road whenever possible, especially if you're slower than other traffic.

Where you can ride

You can ride on most roads, **except:**

- controlled access highways, such as Ontario's 400-series highways
- across a road within a pedestrian cross-over - you must walk your bike to the other side

Bike helmets

Children and youth



By law, every cyclist under age 18 must wear an approved helmet.

Riders under 16 years old: a parent or guardian must make sure their child wears a helmet.

Adults

Helmets are not compulsory for adults over 18; but a helmet can greatly reduce the risk of permanent injury or death if you fall or collide. It is strongly recommended that all riders wear helmets.

Types of helmets

The best helmets:

- are made to meet strict safety standards
- fit properly when worn correctly

Bicycle safety resources

For more information about cycling safety, check out:

- [CAN-BIKE](#), a series of education and skill courses on cycling safely
- [Canada's Independent Bicycle Retailers Association](#)
- the [Toronto Cycling Committee](#): a citizen's advisory group on bike-related policies
- the [Share the Road Cycling Coalition](#): an organization that works to make communities more bicycle-friendly
- [CAA Bike Safety](#): safety tips for cyclists and drivers
- [ServiceOntario Publications](#): order copies of *Cycling Skills* and the *Young Cyclist's Guide*

Frequently Asked Questions

New Cycling Changes

Q1: What new changes do cyclists need to know about?

Beginning January 1, 2017:



- New bicycle traffic signals can be used to direct bicycle traffic at intersections
- Cyclists must obey bicycle traffic signals where they are installed
- Cyclists who do not obey bicycle traffic signals can face a set fine of \$85; and, \$120 in community safety zones
- Where both a regular traffic signal and a bicycle traffic signal apply to the same lane, cyclists must obey the bicycle signal
- If no bicycle traffic signals are present, cyclists must obey standard traffic signals

Q2: Why did the province pass legislation for bicycle signals?

Bicycle traffic signals are expected to improve safety at intersections and help reduce collisions with pedestrians and drivers.

New One-Metre Passing Law

Q1: What is the penalty to drivers for not leaving a minimum of one-metre distance when passing a cyclist?

The penalty for not leaving a minimum one-metre passing distance is a set fine of \$85.00 plus a \$5 court fee plus a \$20 victim surcharge fine for a total payable of \$110.00.

Drivers who contest their ticket by going to court may face a fine of up to \$500 if found guilty (fine range is \$60 to \$500). Upon conviction, two demerit points will also be assigned against the individual's driver record.

Q2: Will cyclists also be required to leave a minimum one-metre distance when passing a vehicle?

Cyclists are not required to leave a specific one-metre space; however, they are required to obey all the rules of the road. Cyclists who are being overtaken should turn out to the right to allow the vehicle to pass.

Q3: What if there isn't enough room to allow for a one-metre passing distance? Can a vehicle cross the centre median line to pass the cyclist?

A motorist may, if done safely, and in compliance with the rules of the road, cross the centre line of a roadway in order to pass a cyclist. If this cannot be done, he or she must wait behind the cyclist until it is safe to pass.

Dooring

Q1. What are the new increased penalties for "dooring" offenses?

The new penalties for improper opening of a vehicle door (for driver or passenger) are a set fine of \$300.00 upon conviction and 3 demerit points. The total payable fine is \$365.00 (\$set fine plus \$60 victim fine surcharge and \$5 court costs).

The current HTA set fine for "dooring" offence is \$85.00 upon conviction and the total payable fine is \$110 (\$set fine plus \$20 victim fine surcharge and \$5 court fees). Additionally a conviction results in 2 demerit points being added to the individual's driver record.

Q2. Does the "dooring" law only apply to cyclists?

Although cyclists may be the most commonly perceived road user affected by this behaviour, the "dooring" law applies to all road users and is not specific to cyclists.

The government is committed to helping ensure the safety of not only cyclists but all road users.

Increasing the Fine for Cyclists for Non-Compliance with Light, Reflector and Reflective Material Requirements

Q1. Why is the government increasing the fines for cyclists with improper light, reflector and reflective tape?

Currently, the fine for non-compliance with bicycle light, reflector and reflective requirements, carries a maximum fine of \$20 which is less than the majority of set fines for motorists and cyclists.

Increasing this fine will put this violation in line with all other cycling violations.

Allowing Cyclists to use Intermittent Flashing Red Lights

Q1. Why is the government allowing cyclists to use a red flashing light? Won't this be distracting to other road users?

Red flashing lights were previously not allowed under the Highway Traffic Act even though the majority of cyclists were already using rear lamps that produce intermittent flashes of red light to make themselves more visible to others.

Considering the safety benefits from the use of these lights, and to prevent cyclists from potentially being charged, the Highway Traffic Act was amended to allow bicycles to use lamps that produce intermittent flashes of red lights.

A motorist may, if done safely, and in compliance with the rules of the road, cross the centre line of a roadway in order to pass a cyclist. If this cannot be done, he or she must wait behind the cyclist until it is safe to pass.

Bicycle Helmets

Q1: What is the fine for not wearing a bicycle helmet?

All bicycle riders under the age of 18 need to wear an approved bicycle helmet when travelling on any public road. The total fine is \$75.

Q2: How do I know which bicycle helmet to buy?

Look for a helmet that fits comfortably and meets safety standards. Check the inside of the helmet for stickers from one or more of the following organizations:

- Snell Memorial Foundation: Snell B90, Snell B95, Snell B90S, or Snell N94
 - American National Standard Institute: ANSI Z90.4-1984
 - American Society For Testing and Materials: ASTM F1447-94
 - British Standards Institute: BS6863:1989
 - Standards Association of Australia: AS2063.2-1990
 - United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) 16 CFR Part 1203
-

Recommended for you

- [#CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy](#)
- [Bill 31](#)