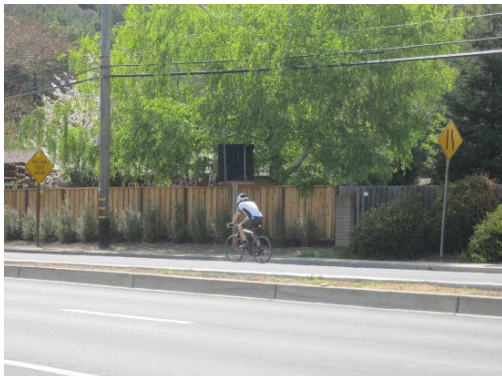


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## Bike riding season is fast approaching - are you prepared to cycle safely?

By Vera Kochan



A cyclist heads toward Canyon Bridge. Photo Vera Kochan

dangerous decision.

What you wear is just as important as how you ride a bike. Although anyone over the age of 18 in California is not required to wear a helmet, it can protect you in the event of a fall. Wearing bright clothing during the day, and something reflective at night adds to your visibility. For that matter, dressing your bike with reflective gear or lights for night riding is also a good idea. Tucking or tying shoe laces and pant legs keeps them from getting caught in a bike chain.

NHTSA warns that many bike accidents occur when the rider is not paying attention to the condition of the road itself. Hazards such as large pebbles, potholes, grates, and train tracks can cause riders to lose control of their bikes and fall. It is important to stay focused especially when sharing the road with cars and trucks. A bicycle is a moving vehicle that should drive with the flow of traffic. Bike "drivers" must also obey the same street signs, signals and road markings the way motor vehicles do. Most importantly, no texting, listening to music, or doing anything else that may cause a distraction.

According to NHTSA pedestrians can also become a hazard to cyclists, because their unexpected movements might occur during a moment when they are unaware of an oncoming bike. If passing a pedestrian, announce your presence "on your left," or "passing on your left," or use a bell.

As the weather warms up, motor vehicle drivers should expect to share the road with more cyclists than during winter months. Seasoned cyclists oftentimes can ride their bikes as fast as cars and are allowed to travel with traffic in certain circumstances. Drivers should also be aware of their surroundings in parking lots, at stop signs and when backing up because bikes, being smaller than cars, can maneuver with more agility in and out of tight and hidden areas. When stopping to make a right turn, pay special attention behind you as a cyclist may be approaching with the same idea in mind (however, even though cyclists are required to follow the same rules of the road as motor vehicles do, that doesn't always happen). Additionally, passing a cyclist on a narrow roadway can prove difficult. For maximum caution, pass when it's safe to move over into an adjacent lane.

Using common sense, courtesy and obeying the rules of the road, will help everyone to enjoy a safe biking experience.

For more information visit: [www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/bicycle-safety](http://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/bicycle-safety).

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