

# **The Law Officer's Guide to Bicycle Safety Program**

A project of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

## **Welcome and Overview**

### **Welcome to the Law Officer's Guide to Bicycle Safety**

In an effort to further promote safe roadway use in the United States, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) developed this national program to educate police departments about laws relating to bicyclists. The program is intended to be taught by law enforcement officers to law enforcement officers as a stand-alone resource.

The major objective of the program is to give law enforcement officers of all backgrounds the tools they need to properly enforce the laws that affect bicyclists. The program focuses on all police officers, including those who may not be interested in bicycling or who are not able to attend in-depth trainings. The program will also be useful to police departments who wish to do outreach to the bicycle community or other organizations.

Materials with this package include: standard and optional presentations, reference materials including statistical data on car-bike crashes and traffic laws, free educational materials and graphics, instructor materials, and short videos.

Note: if you are instructor who needs detailed instructions on running a training, skip to the document titled, "Instructions for Trainers" included with these materials.

### **Here's what a few police officers have to say about the program:**

"Just taking the class will increase my awareness of bicycles on the roadways. I believe I will be more inclined to take enforcement actions now than I was in the past." – police officer, Homewood, IL.

"The course will be helpful in increasing public safety because it helps train officers how to effectively ride, handle, and use the bike to patrol the community they work in." – police officer, University of Illinois.

"I will make an effort to do more enforcement towards bikers who disregard traffic devices and towards motorists who exhibit dangerous behavior towards bikers." – police officer – Ann Arbor, MI.

"With this knowledge, I will be more inclined to confront the problem and do my part to reduce injuries and deaths." – police officer, Wheeling, WV.

**Format/Intended Length:** Self-administration in an electronic (PowerPoint) multi-media format (incorporated videos). The training can be offered in a number of ways:

- 1) One training- as part of an annual training day, in service training, or basic training – provided by the training officer- total training time two hours;
- 2) Multiple segments as part of multiple roll-call briefings;
- 3) Self study guide done at law officers’ individual workstation. The course includes reference material and handouts for police departments to use, to include safety tips for cyclists and motorists.

The course describes bicycle related traffic laws in detail, explains why they should be enforced, and covers crash investigation. It includes statistics and bicycling facts, segments such as “Ticketing Motorists,” “Bicyclists are Drivers,” “Position on Roadway,” and clarification of the limited applicability and redundancy of the “Far Right Rule.” Computer video illustrating such topics as door zone and sidewalk dangers is included, as well as video showing Cambridge (MA) police officers enforcing the law in real-life situations.

To allow for the varied laws from state to state, this program has provided placeholder sections within the PowerPoint presentation that can be modified by the instructor. As an additional benefit, the instructor can take the opportunity to become very familiar with the relevant sections of local traffic law pertaining to bicycles.

**Target Audience:** Taught by Law Enforcement Officers to Law Enforcement Officers. This is bicycling 101 for law enforcement; it is intended to embrace a non-cycling audience, those who are not directly part of a Cops-On-Bike program, or those with an interest but who are not able to attend in-depth trainings. The program will also be useful to police departments who wish to do outreach to the bicycle community or other organizations.

**Background:**

The program was designed and drafted by the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition with the assistance of a Technical Working Group as part of NHTSA’s National Strategies to Advancing Bicycle Safety. The Technical Working Group gave input as to how to prioritize different skills and priorities were chosen based on statistics showing that by riding on the right side of the street and obeying traffic control devices, cyclists could help prevent accidents.

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