

Same Roads, Same Rules for Both Bicyclists & Motorists

By Aimée Carrier

You're late for work and in a hurry, but there's a bicyclist in the middle of your lane, holding up your progress. Or, you're the bicyclist trying to maneuver around parked cars, and there's a car tight on your tail.

The situation can be frustrating from both sides, but most dangerous for the bicyclist.

"There's no such thing as a minor collision with a person on a bicycle," said AAA Traffic Safety Manager John Paul.

At this time of the year, there is a greater number of bicycles on the roads. And that's where they belong, Mr. Paul emphasized. The rules governing their use are the same as those for motor vehicles.

For a safe ride, bicyclists should follow these rules:

- Do not ride bikes on side-



Be sure to explain bicycle safety and traffic rules to children.

walks. Stay on the roadway, traveling in the same direc-

tion as motor-vehicle traffic.

- Bicycles should stay to

the right along the curb.

- Ride in single file unless passing another bicycle.

- Before veering into traffic, make sure it is safe to do so.

- Walk a bike across an intersection rather than riding.

- Obey traffic signals and signs, and indicate actions such as turning and stopping by using appropriate hand gestures.

And, the rules are the same for adults and children.

For that reason, "before you buy a bike for a child, make sure he or she is mentally and physically ready to ride it," said AAA Education Specialist Diana Imondi Dias, who teaches bicycle safety to children. "A bike is not a toy."

"Parents should explain traffic rules to their children," said Ms. Imondi Dias.

It's also important that children know how to use hand

signals to indicate direction.

But bicycle safety is not just the burden of riders.

"Motorists need to be constantly aware of everything around them," Mr. Paul said.

Allow plenty of room when you are passing a bicycle, and take care when pulling into an intersection. Come to a full stop before taking a right turn on red, as there might be a bicycle in your path.

This issue of sharing road responsibly is the focus of a new awareness initiative by the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition (MassBike).


"Same Roads, Same Rules" resulted from a survey of cyclists and motorists, said Shane Jordan, Director of Education for MassBike. The survey revealed safety concerns and law breaking by both groups.

The difference, Mr. Jordan said, is "when bicyclists break the law, they predominantly endanger themselves. When motorists break the law, they predominantly endanger others."


Mr. Jordan said the most common traffic violations committed by cyclists are failure to stop at intersections, signs and signals. For motorists, they are failure to yield and illegal turns.

"We don't blame any one group," Mr. Jordan said. "We're just addressing the issues where awareness is most lacking on both sides."

The Web site dedicated to the initiative, www.sameroadssamerules.org, provides safety information for drivers and cyclists and addresses common myths and misconceptions about the rules of the road.

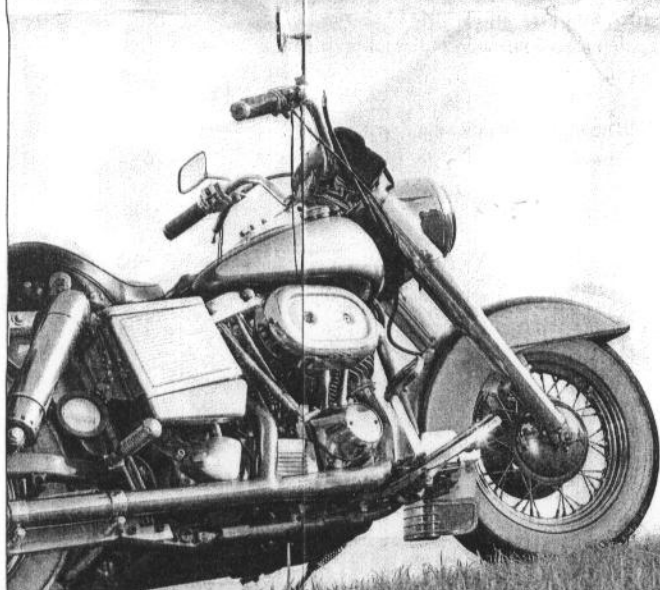
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