

City of Los Angeles

Bicycling

Los Angeles

Rules, regulations and safety tips to help you make the most of bicycling around LA.



BIKE

**for fun
to relax
for your health
for the environment
competitively
to meet people
to get in shape
as a hobby
to work
to the mall
as a family
with your friends
just because!**



Bicycle Basics

■ Choosing a Bicycle

Find the right bicycle that you will enjoy and ride. Visit your local bicycle shop and test ride several different types. Some are better for commuting and some are more recreational. Let the bicycle shop know how you intend to ride and see what they recommend.

Styles of bikes include:

- Road Bike
- Mountain Bike
- Hybrid Bike/Transportation Bike
- Cruiser
- Recumbent

■ Getting Comfortable on Your Bike

Get fitted on your bicycle (frame size, body position). Finding the right frame to fit you is very important. Handlebar stem, handlebars and saddles can be adjusted to fit you but the frame cannot. Adjust the seat up, forward or backward until you're comfortable. Keep level, and avoid too much stretching to reach the handlebars, or not enough room so that elbows and knees overlap. Be sure and purchase a good saddle. Women's saddles are now available. Comfort is important!

■ Keep Your Bicycle in Good Repair

Maintain your bike and keep it in good working condition. Check the brakes regularly and keep tires properly inflated. Routine maintenance is simple and you can learn to do it yourself or you can leave it to an expert at a local bike shop.

Bicycle Equipment

■ Ride a Well-Equipped Bicycle

For safety and convenience outfit your bike with a bell or horn, rearview mirrors, fenders (for rainy rides), and racks, baskets or bike bags. Always use a strong headlight and tail light at night as required by law.

Helmet

Helmets save lives. Wear one every time you're on the bicycle. Make sure it is approved for safety by U.S. CPSC. Test fit your helmet. It should sit level on your head, low over your forehead, the straps should be snug and form a triangle over the ears. The helmet should not shift or move on your head.

Blinkers

A rear red blinking (flashing) light on your rack, saddle or clothing is recommended.

Lights

California requires that bicyclists use lights for night-time riding. Use a front white light on the handlebar (headlamp). Reflectors should be placed on the front, back, on the wheels and pedals of your bike, or place reflective straps on your pant legs or shoes. Consider wearing a reflective vest.

Tools

You should carry a patch kit, spare inner tube, pump or compressed air, tire levers or tire removal devices, and wrench, if your bike is not equipped with quick release skewers.

Baggage/Panniers

There are many different styles of bags. Front and back mount bags are very common. Side panniers can hold your work items and a change of clothes with plenty of room for other essentials.

Racks

To hold panniers or bike-specific bags, check with your local bicycle shop for an assortment of racks.

Locks

There are many different locks out there. The most dependable type, if used correctly, is the U-lock. Cable and padlock are also an option, though not as theft-deterrent. Make sure you lock the frame and both wheels to a fixed or permanent bicycle parking rack or fixed object every time you leave the bicycle unattended. Be sure to remove items that can be easily stolen by thieves.

Mirror

Mirrors can be attached to your helmet or handlebars to help you see what's behind you while you're on the road.

Bungee Cords

These are very helpful to secure items and fasten your bags to your rack.

Water Bottle and Cage

Attach a water bottle cage to the frame of your bicycle. Make sure you carry and drink water while you're riding. Water bottles and cages come in different sizes and styles. Again, choose the one that's right for you.

Eye Protection

Non-shattering sunglasses that wrap around your face will protect you from glare, bugs, debris and the wind. If you wear prescription glasses, try to get a special pair for riding.

Seat

There are many different types of seats: gel-filled, spring cushioned, middle groove or split, wide rear, as well as gender-specific. Find one that fits your riding needs. Expect to have a sore behind when you first start riding regardless of the seat you're purchased. As time goes by your body will adjust.

If you have continual discomfort, go to your local bicycle shop to adjust your seat or seat position. Many factors go into seat adjustment; saddle design, position, riding style and rider position.

Horns or Bells

A loud horn may be best to capture a motorist's attention. A bell will allow you to tell a pedestrian you're nearby without startling them.

Gloves

Padded gloves make your ride more comfortable and enable you to wipe off your tires if you ride through glass or debris. In addition, they keep your hands warm during cooler weather.

Fenders

Minimize splatter on your clothes and bicycle from wet and dirty streets. A rear rack can serve as a fender in drier climates like Los Angeles.

Toe Clips or Clipless Pedals

These increase pedaling efficiency but take some skill and time to learn to use. Not all shoes fit clipless pedals.



Clothing for the Bicycle

■ Dress for the Ride

Wear a hard shell helmet whenever you ride. You may also want special shoes. Wear light colored clothes when riding at night and add reflective material if possible. Dressing in layers allows you to adjust to temperature changes on longer rides.

■ Work Clothes

Bring a change of clothes if you plan on riding long distances to work. Wrinkle free clothes pack easier and will look better when you change for work, roll clothes instead of folding them, and pack loosely for the least wrinkling. If you have space available, you may want to leave a couple of outfits and pairs of shoes at work.

■ Cleaning Up at Work

Simply towel off and change into clean clothes. If you ride long distances in hot weather you may need a shower. If there are none available at your workplace, you might consider joining a nearby health club. Inquire about shower-only privileges.

■ What to Carry with You

- Photo identification
- Emergency contact information (dog tags)
- Cell phone for emergencies
- Tools, including bike pump and patch kit
- Lock
- Water bottle
- Cash

Fitness

■ Get in Shape

Begin with short trips, working up to longer rides. This will ease muscles into shape and allow you to become more comfortable handling a bike in traffic. Before starting on a longer trip, spend a few minutes stretching your legs and upper body.

■ Healthy Alternative

Riding your bike will help make you, and keep you, physically fit. Bicycling is a healthy way to run errands and get to work while helping to clean the air and reduce congestion.



Safety and Riding Techniques

■ Traffic Basics - Sharing the Road Safely

Bicyclists must drive their bicycles like other vehicles on the roadway, if they are to be taken seriously by motorists. Know the local and state bicycle laws; this will inform you of your rights and responsibilities as a bicyclist. (References listed in the back of this booklet.)

Ride to the Right

Stay a safe distance from the curb, gutters or parked car doors to avoid hazards.

Ride with Traffic

It is illegal and dangerous to do otherwise especially at intersections. Never ride against traffic even if you think it's safe. It's not!

Never Ride Against Traffic

Motorists aren't looking for bicyclists riding on the wrong side of the road. Ride with traffic to avoid potential accidents. Use hand signals and eye contact to communicate with motorists and other bicyclists/pedestrians.

Proper Signaling

Hand signals and eye contact tell motorists what you intend to do. Signal as a matter of law, courtesy, and self-protection.

Ride Predictably

Don't weave between parked cars. Motorists may not see you when you try to move back into traffic.

Don't pass on the right. Motorists may not look for, or see, a bicycle passing on the right.

Follow lane markings. Don't turn left from the right lane. Don't ride straight through intersection from a lane marked for right-turns only.

Ride in a Straight Line

Whenever possible, ride your bicycle in a straight line to the right of traffic but about a car door's width away from parked cars. Don't swerve to the curb where there are gaps between parked cars.

Avoid Pavement Hazards

Learn to avoid hazards in the roadway. Watch out for sewer grates, slippery manhole covers, oily pavement, potholes, gravel and slippery roadway markings in the rain. Cross railroad tracks carefully at right angles for better control. As you move across bumps and other hazards, practice standing up on your pedals.

Learn to Make Quick Turns and Stops

Learn to stop and/or turn quickly to avoid hazards or accidents with cars, pedestrians, debris, dogs, car door openings, etc.

Ready to Brake

Learn to use your brakes while riding downhill, in traffic, lights, stop signs and in the rain. Use both the front and the back brakes at the same time. Never use a front brake alone! Keep both hands ready to brake. You may not stop in time if you brake one-handed and you may be ejected over the front wheel of your bicycle. Allow extra distance for stopping in the rain, brakes are less efficient when wet.

Be Seen

For your safety, you need to remain visible while on the roadway. Wear brightly colored clothes and reflective gear, if needed. Don't ride out of view next to cars or the curb.

Watch for Cars Pulling Out

Make eye contact with drivers. Assume they don't see you until they have indicated otherwise.



Scan the Road Behind You

Learn to look back over your shoulder without losing your balance or swerving. Always look over your shoulder to see where traffic is before making a turn or changing lanes. Some riders use rearview mirrors but you could still have a blind spot.

Shifting Gears

Learn how to use your front and back gears without looking down. This will allow you to ride efficiently. Find out about "gear ratios".

Changing Lanes Before a Turn

When you're turning left on a multi-lane street and traffic isn't moving much faster than you, merge left one lane at a time. When traffic is moving faster, skilled riders wait for a gap in traffic and move across all lanes at once.

Turning at Intersections

There are two ways to make a left turn: 1) Like a car, look behind you, signal left with your arm, and merge left before passing or turning. 2) Like a pedestrian, ride straight to the far-side crosswalk. Ride with traffic when the signal changes.

When turning right at intersections, leave room for cars also making right turns. Don't line up in the right turn lane unless you are turning right.

Never wear Headphones

It important to hear the traffic around you while you're riding on the street with cars, trucks and pedestrians. It is also illegal to wear headphones while riding a bicycle.

Bike Lanes

Bicyclists must use bike lanes except when making a left turn, passing, or avoiding hazardous conditions. Bicyclists should ride to the left side of marked bike lanes to avoid car doors and debris.

Blind Spots

Remember that cars and trucks have blind spots, stay out of those areas.

Watch for Dogs

The spinning of wheels and feet tends to attract dogs. If a dog begins chasing you, ignore him, try a firm, loud "No," or spray him with water from your bottle. Do not attempt to kick the dog or scare him by moving suddenly as you could lose your balance and fall.

Riding with Other Bicyclists

Ride in a single line. Communicate directions and roadway debris and conditions with hand signals and by calling out to riders behind you.

Off Street Bicycling

■ Bike Paths

Bicycle paths are specifically built for bicycle travel but don't always go directly where you would like. Try combining bike paths and streets for your trip.

■ Sidewalks

Pedestrians always have the right of way on walkways. By Los Angeles Municipal Code, you must not ride on the sidewalk in

Los Angeles with "willful and wanton disregard for safety". Other cities don't allow sidewalk riding. Always check the local laws. Cross driveways or intersections by slowing to a walking pace and looking very carefully for traffic (especially traffic turning right on a green light).

Route Planning

■ Using a Map

The City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation has developed maps in an effort to assist bicycles in finding routes most suited to their needs and abilities. The maps provide you with existing bikeways, as well as highlight streets, which may be more comfortable for adult bicycle riding. For a free map call 213-580-1199 or website at www.bicyclingla.org.

■ Know your Neighborhood

In your car, test drive the route at the same time of day you would be bike commuting. Drive in the right hand lane and note stops and street conditions. Then test ride your bike commute route. Your route should have, if possible, low traffic volumes, few lights and stops, and good pavement conditions.

■ Have Alternative Routes

Experiment with alternative routes in case your route is closed or detoured. Try www.bikemetro.com for additional route planning.

RIDING & WEATHER

It is important to remember to modify your bicycling habits during inclement weather. It will be more difficult for motorists to see you, and they may have a hard time stopping suddenly. Make yourself as visible as possible, and allow extra time for your trip. A few things to check before you ride include:

- Head and tail lights in good working order
- Reflectors and reflective clothing
- Waterproof jacket and pants, and change of clothes
- Fenders to prevent splatter

BIKE SAFETY & MAINTENANCE

It is very important to keep your bike in safe working order. A simple check before each ride will alert you to any problems. A regular tune-up at your local bike shop will also help ensure that your bicycle is in top condition. A few things to check before you ride include:

- Correct tire pressure and overall equipment wear
- Properly lubricated, clean chain
- Brake pads in good condition and not squeaking
- Headlight, tail light, blinker battery check
- Handlebars secure and no loose tape
- Shifting mechanism functioning properly
- Wheels spin true and centered

Bicycle Parking and Locks

Locks

Buy the best lock you can afford, since none is as expensive as a new bike. A U-shaped high security lock is usually best. Lock the frame and rear wheel to a fixed object. If you have quick release skewers on your front wheel, you should also lock it with the rear wheel.

Inverted-U Racks

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) Bicycle Program installs bicycle racks in the public right-of-way to encourage bicycling to shopping, school, and play. Bicycle racks provide secure, convenient short term, bike parking at office buildings, businesses, or stores.

The LADOT uses an inverted-U bicycle rack. It is 3' high, constructed of 2 3/8" galvanized pipe and holds two bikes. The rack provides good support to the bicycle, and users are able to lock both the wheels and frame of the bicycle. The rack has no sharp edges or moving parts and is virtually maintenance free.

Other Bike Parking

If there is no bicycle parking, find something strong and permanent, in a visible location, to lock up your bicycle.

Bicycles and Transit

Bikes on Buses

Your bicycle rides free on most buses participating in Bikes on Buses programs. Just pay your regular fare and you can load your bicycle in the rack on the front of the bus for free. All the bike racks have simple instructions posted on them. The bicycle racks are designed to hold each bicycle separately, in place by a spring-loaded clamp. Bicycles won't rub, touch, or scratch each other, the bus, or other vehicles.

The LADOT has bicycle racks on its Commuter Express buses.

Safety Tips

Wait for the bus on the curb.

Get the driver's attention before you load or unload your bike.

Always load from the curbside of the street.

Place your bike in the outside slot of the bike rack if empty.

Be visible to the driver.

Sit up front and keep an eye on your bike.

Use the front door when exiting.

Move the empty rack into the upright position.

Do not leave equipment on the bike.



■ **Bikes on Metro Light Rail (Blue, Red, Green, Gold)**

Metro Rail no longer requires bicycle permits. Trains are often crowded and space for bikes is limited, especially during rush hours. For your safety and the safety of others, please follow Metro's simple rules.

Bikes are allowed to board trains except for the following times and directions:

Weekdays: 6:30 - 8:30 am

Metro Blue Line - Long Beach to 7th/Metro

Metro Green Line - Norwalk to Marine

Metro Red Line Union Station - Wilshire/Vermont (both directions)

Metro Gold Line - Sierra Madre to Union Station

Weekdays: 4:30 - 6:30 pm

Metro Blue Line - 7th/Metro to Long Beach

Metro Green Line - Marine to Norwalk

Metro Red Line Union Station - Wilshire/Vermont (both directions)

Metro Gold Line - Union Station to Sierra Madre

There are no restrictions during Weekends and Holidays

Bikes on Metrolink Commuter Trains

Bringing a bike on a train is simple, just pay your regular fare and secure your bicycle in the designated area using the Velcro straps provided. Only two bicycles per car are allowed. The conductor may require a bicyclist to move to a different car or wait for another train due to crowding.



METRO RAIL BIKE RULES

Your bike must not block the doorway of the train operator.

Allow other passengers to exit and enter the train first.

You must use elevators or stairs - not escalators - and always walk your bike.

You cannot ride a bike or other wheeled device on the platform or in the station; they must always be walked.

Tandem, 3-wheeled bikes or fuel-powered vehicles are not allowed on the train.

You must wait for a train with available room to ride.

While on a train, you must hold onto the bike and the kickstand must always be up.

Keep your bike as clean as possible and take care not to brush your bike against others.

Bicyclists under 14 years old must be accompanied by an adult.

In an evacuation, leave your bike on the train and make sure it does not block aisles or doors.

Bike-to-Work Day/Week

www.californiabikecommute.com

P.O. Box 1446, Poway CA 92074 619-679-1027

The annual California Bike Commute Week is typically the third week in May. Please check the official web site (californiabikecommute.com) for specific dates. In the Los Angeles area "Bike-to-Work Day" is usually the third Thursday in May. California Bike Commute Week is an annual project of the California Bicycle Coalition, a non-profit organization, (www.calbike.org), that advocates increased bicycle use, access, safety, and education by promoting the bicycle as an everyday means of transportation and recreation.

Many employers organize various special activities locally. Participants include: rideshare agencies, cities, counties, bicycle advocacy groups, bike shops and others who support bicycle transportation in California communities. Encourage a Bike to Work Day activity at your worksite!

Bicycle Plans, Programs

■ City of Los Angeles Bicycle Plan

The City of Los Angeles adopted its first comprehensive bicycle plan in 1996. Please check the city's website, www.bicyclingla.org, for additional information.

■ City of Los Angeles Bicycle Program

Department of Transportation
221 N. Figueroa St., Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Telephone: 213-580-1177
Fax: 213-580-1188
www.bicyclingla.org

■ City of Los Angeles Bikeway Engineering

Department of Transportation
205 S. Broadway, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Telephone: 213-482-6980
Fax: 213-482-6918

Bicycle Resources

■ City of Los Angeles Bicycle Advisory Committee

221 N. Figueroa St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every even month at 7pm in the Department of Water and Power Board Room, 111 N. Hope Street, CA 90012. Members are appointed by City Council and the Mayor.

City/County Services

To report a city street hazard or maintenance issue contact the appropriate division of the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works.

■ Bureau of Streets Services

Pothole Repair: 800-996-CITY
Information: 213-473-8410

■ Bureau of Street Lighting

Street Light Repair: 800-303-LAMP(5267)
Information: 213-847-6400

Bike Path Maintenance or Closures

Commuter bike paths on river rights of way are closed due to inclement weather. Please call to report poor maintenance conditions or hazards on bike paths (off street).

■ Griffith/ Metro Region

Los Angeles River Bike Path
213-485-4809

■ Pacific Region

Ballona Creek Bike Path
213-396-1615

■ Valley Region

Sepulveda Basin Bike Path, and Hansen Dam Bike Path
818-756-8189

■ Los Angeles County Public Works Department

Beach Bike Paths, San Gabriel, and
L.A. River (south of Atlantic Blvd.) trails.
626-485-3941

CVC & LAMC CODES

CVC Codes

California Vehicle Code establishes the laws and rules of the road in California. Please check the website, www.bicyclingla.org, for laws specific to bicycling on California roadways.

LAMC Codes

Los Angeles Municipal Code includes bicycle codes, laws, and regulations provided help bicyclists ride safely and legally on public roads, bicycle parking, and bikeways in the City of Los Angeles. Please check the website, www.bicyclingla.org, for codes specific to bicycling.





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