

On traffic-free paths

There are several types of traffic-free paths designed for use by cyclists and pedestrians, and in some cases, horse riders.

Public footpaths

Public footpaths are for pedestrians and wheelchair users only. It is illegal to cycle on a footpath unless permission has been granted by the landowner to use it as a shared use path (see below).

Bridleways

Public bridleways can be used by walkers, horseriders, wheelchair users and cyclists. However, by law, cyclists should give way to other users. Bridleways may not have been specifically designed for cycle use, so surfaces may be poor.

Shared use paths

Shared use paths are those designated for use by pedestrians, cyclists, and in some cases horse riders. These are usually free of motor traffic and are specifically designed for the different users, so surfaces should be good. Permissive shared use paths include sections of canal towpaths, forest tracks, disused railways, footpaths and routes adjacent to footpaths. Many of the traffic-free sections of the National Cycle Network use shared use paths.

Experience in the UK and abroad shows that such paths can benefit everyone and, with a little awareness and respect for others, they can be comfortably and safely shared.

Advice for cyclists:

- ✓ Keep to your side of any dividing line (but if in doubt, keep left).
- ✓ Give way to pedestrians, wheelchair users and horse riders and acknowledge those that give way to you.
- ✓ Don't expect to cycle at high speeds and be prepared to slow down or stop if necessary.
- ✓ Take special care at junctions, bends and entrances.
- ✓ Fix a bell to your bike and use it to warn of your approach. However, remember that some people are hard of hearing or visually impaired so don't assume they can see or hear you.

Advice for other path users:

- ✓ Keep to your side of any dividing line.
- ✓ Be aware of children learning to cycle, who may swerve unexpectedly.
- ✓ Take care at junctions, bends and entrances, especially in wet weather.
- ✓ Keep dogs under control.



photo: Julia Bayne/Sustrans

Further information

The Highway Code is available from the Department for Transport's website at: www.dft.gov.uk or hard copies should be available from your local library or driving school.

Sustrans publishes a Good Cycling Code and an information sheet on Shared Use Paths, visit: www.sustrans.org.uk or call: 0117 929 0888 for a hard copy.

The Countryside Agency has published a research note on shared use paths available to download at: www.countryside.gov.uk

Other leaflets in this series:

- Cycling: the right bike for you
- Cycling: basic bike maintenance
- Cycling: in different conditions
- Cycling: security matters
- Cycling: with children
- Cycling: finding your way
- Cycling: clothes & accessories

For more copies of this leaflet or others in the series, or for advice on where to cycle, including maps and guides, contact Sustrans on 0117 929 0888 or visit www.sustrans.org.uk

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Cycling sharing your route





Wherever you cycle - whether on a busy main road, country lane or traffic-free path - you're likely to be sharing your route with other users.

On the highway, cyclists and motorists usually share the same road space - and each are entitled to use it. Likewise cyclists will often share traffic-free routes with pedestrians and in some cases horse riders.

This leaflet sets out some simple steps for greater awareness and respect between cyclists, motorists, pedestrians and others to help make everyone's journeys safer and more enjoyable.

Gaining confidence on a bike is generally a lot easier than learning to drive a car. And once you're in the saddle, it's often quicker and easier to get around by bike. This leaflet is one of a series giving tips to help you get going - and enjoy the freedom and convenience of cycling.

On roads

Advice for cyclists:

- ✓ Follow the Highway Code – in particular, don't jump traffic lights or cycle on pavements (except where designated).
- ✓ Use clear signals at all times, so that other road users are in no doubt as to what you intend to do.
- ✓ At night, ensure that motorists can see you by using lights and wearing reflective clothing. (It's a good idea to wear reflective clothing during the day in urban settings, where there is heavy traffic.)
- ✓ In wet weather, take care and watch your speed. Surfaces may be slippery and it will take longer to stop.
- ✓ At junctions, gaining eye contact with other road users is a good way of ensuring that they have seen you.



Road markings make life a lot easier for everyone

Advice for motorists:

- ✓ Just as there is no such thing as the typical driver, there is no such thing as the typical cyclist. Be aware that different cyclists have very different needs and levels of experience.
- ✓ When turning left, especially in heavy traffic, watch cyclists coming up on your near side and be careful not to cut them up.
- ✓ When approaching right-hand turns, check for cyclists in the middle of the road waiting for a break in the on-coming traffic before turning.
- ✓ Keep within the speed limit and slow down for cyclists.
- ✓ Give cyclists a wide berth when overtaking. They may need to avoid parked cars and hazards, such as drains, pot holes or poor surfacing that you cannot see.
- ✓ At night, use dipped headlights when approaching cyclists.
- ✓ In wet weather, allow cyclists extra room as surfaces will be wet and may be slippery.
- ✓ At give way lines, look carefully to ensure no cyclists are about to cross your path before moving forward.
- ✓ Try cycling yourself! The bike can often be a quick and easy alternative to the car for short everyday journeys to the leisure centre, station or shops.



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