



# State Law Regarding

# RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF CYCLISTS



*\*\*This document is only meant to be a guide and not intended to be used as a legal document. Please refer to the appropriate statute for details of any laws pertaining to the use of bicycles and motor vehicles.\*\**

## Abreast Riding

**The Law:** 23 V.S.A. §1139(b)

Riders may not ride more than two abreast; and riders “shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic” and “shall ride within a single marked lane.”

**The Enforcement:**

\$105 waiver penalty

## Brakes

**The Law:** 23 V.S.A. §1141(c)

No person may operate a bicycle unless it is equipped with a brake which will enable the operator to make the braked wheels skid on dry, level, clean pavement.

**The Enforcement:**

\$76 waiver penalty

## Hand Signals

**The Law:** 23 V.S.A. §1065

No turn shall be made without first giving a signal. Left turn: left arm extended horizontally. Right turn: left arm extended upward or right arm extended horizontally. Stop or decrease speed: left arm extended downward. A bicyclist shall comply with this subsection unless he or she cannot do so safely.

**The Enforcement:**

2 Points, \$93 waiver penalty

## Night Operation

**The Law:** 23 V.S.A. §1141

When operating at night, a bicycle must have a lamp in the front which emits light visible from 500 feet; red light in the rear visible from 300 feet or reflector(s) totaling at least 20 square inches visible from 300 feet to the rear.

**The Enforcement:**

State: \$76 waiver penalty

## Motor Vehicles Passing Bicycles

**The Law:** 23 V.S.A. §1033(b)

A motor vehicle passing a bicycle “shall exercise due care, which includes increasing clearance to a recommended distance of at least four feet, to pass the vulnerable user safely, and shall cross the center of the highway only when safe to do so.”

**The Enforcement:**

4 Points, \$392 waiver penalty

## Motor Vehicles Crowding & Harassing

**The Law:** 23 V.S.A. § 1039

The operator of a vehicle shall not, in a careless or imprudent manner, approach, pass, or maintain speed unnecessarily close to a bicyclist, and an occupant of a vehicle shall not throw any object or substance at a vulnerable user.

**The Enforcement:**

4 Points (all), \$277 waiver penalty (crowding), \$392 waiver penalty (throwing objects)

## Registration

No requirement or enforcement for registration.

## General: Rights & Responsibilities

**The Law:** 23 V.S.A. §1136(c)

Every person riding a bicycle is granted all of the rights and is subject to all of the duties applicable to operators of vehicles, except as to those provisions which by their very nature can have no application.

**The Enforcement:**

Same penalties for bicycles as for motor vehicles under state and local rules.

# Where Bicycles May Ride

## Bicycles Prohibited On Limited Access Highways

**The Law:** 23 V.S.A. §1004

It is illegal for bicycles to ride on limited access highways like I89 or I91.

**The Enforcement:**

2 points, \$162 waiver penalty

## Where To Ride In the Roadway

**The Law:** 23 V.S.A. §1139(a)

Bikes should generally ride as near to the right as practicable. Exceptions: to make a left turn; if the right lane becomes a right-turn-only lane; to pass another user; to avoid a hazard. A person operating a bicycle must exercise due care when passing.

**The Enforcement:**

\$76 waiver penalty

## Riding On Sidewalks & Crosswalks

**The Law:** 23 V.S.A. §1136(d)(1)

There is no state law that prohibits bicyclists from riding on sidewalks, with the exception of motor-assisted bicycles, which are prohibited on sidewalks. However, municipalities have the authority to regulate their own sidewalks. Bicyclists do not have the right-of-way in crosswalks under state law

## Paved Road Shoulders Are Bicycles Lanes

**The Law:** 19 VSA §2301(3)

“Paved road shoulders are considered bicycle lanes” which the statute defines as for preferential use by bicycles.

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## Local Motion

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