

## CYCLING IN TRAFFIC

### GENERAL RULES

Share The Road!

Use common sense and courtesy:

- Your actions must take into consideration the safety of other road users – drivers, pedestrians, other cyclists, and your fellow group members. When in doubt, err on the side of *everyone's* safety
- YIELD TO PEDESTRIANS WHO HAVE THE RIGHT OF WAY

Avoid “road rage” situations:

- When another road user
  - Acts stupidly and creates a dangerous situation, or
  - Yells at you for any number of reasons, most of which are not your fault
- Just LET IT GO. Take a deep breath, be thankful that no one has been hurt, and **MOVE ON** physically and mentally.

Ride with intention:

- CLEARLY COMMUNICATE WITH ALL OTHER ROAD USERS
- This means that you need to make a decision and make it clear, whether you are giving way or taking the right of way

Remember your group riding rules and etiquette:

- Ride single file, except in situations where your group is directed by your Leader ride double file; then take over the lane
- Exception: police in Bergen County (NJ) will stop and occasionally ticket groups of cyclists who don't ride single file, even in situations where riding double file makes sense
- Always follow the wheel in front of you, maintaining at most one bike length, regardless of whether it's single or double file riding
  - Motorists appreciate the predictability of a steady, straight line of cyclists, especially when passing

When on the road, you represent not only yourself but also all others in the cycling community. Don't give non-cyclists a reason to view us negatively.

## CYCLING IN TRAFFIC

### PROPER POSITIONING IN THE ROAD

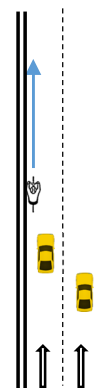
#### Two-Way Traffic:

- Stay to the right, especially outside urban areas and on busy roads with fast-moving traffic
- Avoid riding parallel close to grooves, ridges, and the sides of metal plates in/on the roads



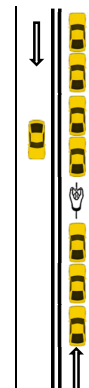
#### One-Way Traffic:

- Stay to the left, as drivers can maneuver around you more easily, and you're less likely to get "doored" by people getting out of parked cars
- On NYC Avenues, also use the left-most lane, as you're less likely to get "doored," and you won't have to deal with buses.
  - Stay to the right of the left-most lane, so that you can go around left-turning, double-parked vehicles and pedestrians who pop out from between parked cars.



#### Heavy Traffic:

- Especially in slow-moving heavy traffic, establish position in the middle of a lane
- Don't skirt the edges, as car drivers are too likely to take chances on getting around you and you might get side-swiped

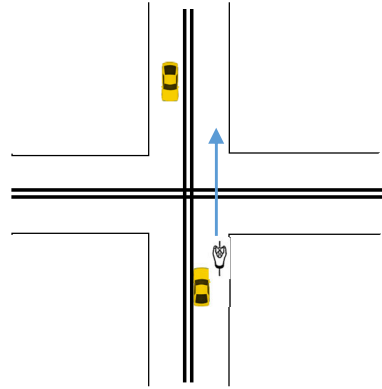


## NAVIGATING THROUGH INTERSECTIONS

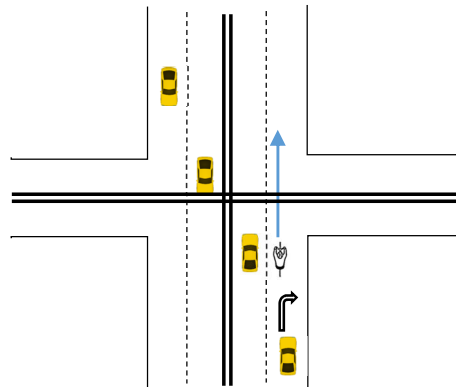
Imagine your bike and the surrounding cars on tracks. You want to position yourself so that you will end up on the right shoulder of your target road on the other side of the intersection, without crossing “tracks” with the nearby cars.

### Going Straight:

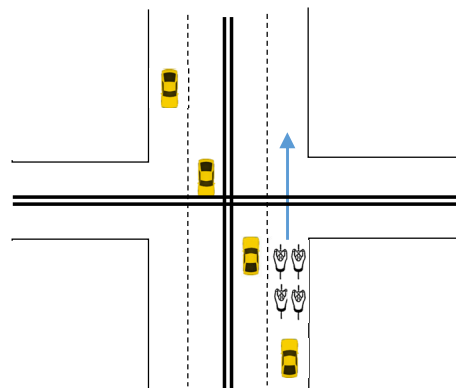
- In one lane of traffic, stay to the right



- In two lanes of traffic, if there is a right turn-only lane, stay to the left of the right-turn lane

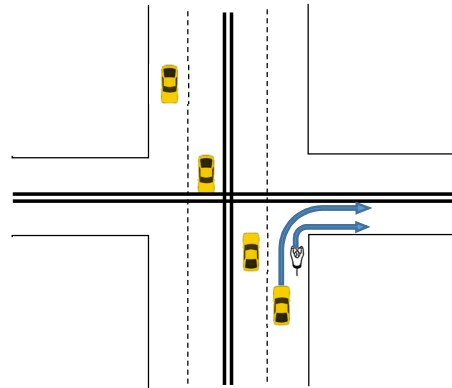


- If there is no right-turn lane, a large group should form a double line and take your place in the right-most lane. Once through the intersection, ease right into a single line

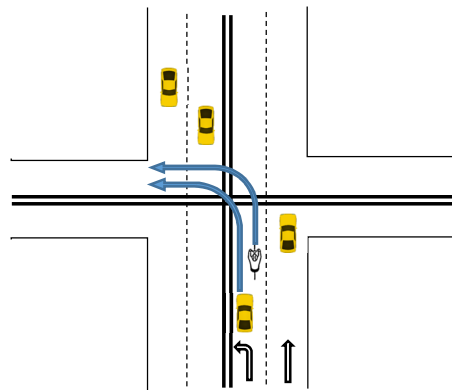


Turns

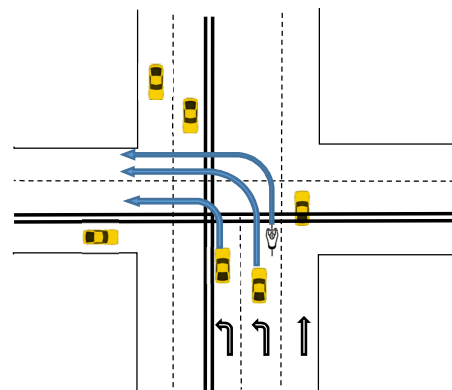
- Turning Right: Stay to the right of the right-most lane



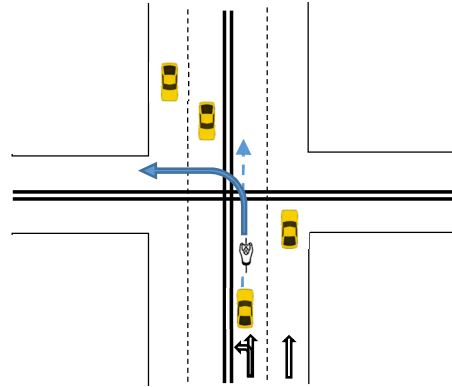
- Turning Left: Stay to the right of the left-most lane, as this allows you to stay on the right of left-turning cars



- When there are two (or more) left-turn lanes: use the right-most left-turn lane in order to stay to the right of the turning cars



- When traffic can either turn left or go straight: take the entire lane in order to avoid conflicts with cars



Attempt to stick with the group going through an intersection. If the group forms a cohesive unit, most motorists will see the group as a “one”. If you leave gaps, motorists will often attempt to take the right of way. *When in doubt, signal, slow and stop.* The lead group will slow or wait. Safety FIRST!

### **Intersections not controlled by lights**

Generally, we want to keep the group together on the road. While safety always comes first, and sound judgment should be used, following are some guidelines for progressing through intersections that are not controlled by lights.

- 4-way stops:
  - Upon arrival, the first rider may slow down or even stop to let cars already at the intersection through.
  - Once the first rider proceeds through the intersection, think of the group as a train or a really long car. All riders should continue through the intersection, even if cars are there (always keeping a wary eye on the cars present)
  - This will clear the intersection faster and allow everyone to get on with their day more quickly than if we treated each cyclist as an individual car
  - That said, if a car clearly intends to take its right of way, do not argue and simply give way to the impatient motorist
- 2-way stop, the group has a stop sign:
  - Each rider slows down and makes an individual call to proceed through the intersection
  - If the cyclist going through the intersection notes a car coming towards the group, he or she should warn the group (i.e., “car right,” “car left,” or “car up”)
  - Many times, in the suburbs, drivers will slow down or stop and waive the group through.
    - Once it becomes apparent that the car is yielding the right of way, DO NOT ARGUE
    - Take advantage of their generosity, thank them, and then go through the intersection
    - In these cases, the group becomes a train / really long car again, and the remaining riders can follow – subsequent riders should NOT stop and waive the car through – thus keeping the group together
- 2-way stop, the group has the right-of-way:
  - Proceed through, as a group and at speed.
    - This also applies for driveways and parking lot entrances.
    - At intersections where it may not be apparent which side has the stop sign (i.e., on tertiary roads in some residential areas), keep an eye out for cars approaching quickly or bullying their way through the intersection
    - Again, if a car clearly intends to take the right of way, do not argue and simply give way to the impatient motorist.

## CYCLING IN TRAFFIC

### NYC CYCLING TIPS

- Don't skirt the edges of a street or avenue. Keep at least an open car door's width between you and the line of parked cars. Proceed straight ahead, keeping the position you've established.
- NEVER squeeze between a double-parked vehicle and a line of parked cars. Go around the outside of the double-parked vehicle
- Be particularly careful with cabs that may stopped to discharge passengers. They don't always pull to the curb and may leave more room between their cab and parked cars
  - Stop behind them, or go around them, but do not pass between them and the curb or parked car
  - If you see a cab's roof light or hazard lights go on, beware – they're about to let out a fare, so expect a door to open.
- Go slowly in stand-still traffic. It's full of surprises.
- Top Threats to Cyclists on City Streets:
  - Themselves – Aggressive / impatient riders
  - Pedestrians – They tend to listen for traffic, not look for it. Be ready to yell "heads up," use your cycling bell, bark like a dog, or use another technique to gain their attention *courteously*. No swearing or rude hand gestures, please.
    - Pedestrians are trained to look for cars in the road, not bicycles
    - Pedestrians will use cycling lanes as sidewalk extensions
    - Pedestrians consistently underestimate the speed of cyclists and will walk out in front of a bicycle in situations where they would never step in front of a car
  - Private motorists – they may be not used to / scared of being on the road with cyclists
  - Potholes, metal "tire-eating" construction plates and grates – especially when wet
  - Grooves or cracks running parallel with your line of travel

### FINAL THOUGHTS

- Try to make eye contact with drivers when interacting with their vehicle
- Don't count entirely on a vehicle's turn (or lack of turn) signals
- The best way to indicate that you're planning to stop is to unclip and put your foot down
- You Go Where You Look:
  - Avoid target fixation by looking past where you are going.
  - Pick your line and always look ahead.
  - Keep seeing your way through and past the turn.

And remember this:

