



GENERAL POINTERS FOR CYCLING ON THE ROAD

ASSESSING RISKS



A trainer should:

- **Risk assess the route**, have a **written risk assessment** to hand and should incorporate any **procedures** highlighted to minimise risk (see Appendix)
- Guide the group of trainees to continually **risk assess** their **changing environment** over the course of the journey and to take appropriate action – this is known as **dynamic risk assessment**
- **Rural** areas are different from **urban** areas, which are different in turn from **suburban** areas, so each environment will need to be assessed differently by the trainer and the trainees

PLANNING FOR THE ROAD



A trainer should:

- Have trainees **look at traffic** when they are car passengers and **ask questions of drivers** about signs, manoeuvres, positioning etc. as they go along – it is a **great way to learn** about the road
- Know that the best **safety** devices on a bike are the **brain, eyes and ears**
- Always remember that a **bike is small, slow and light** compared to other vehicles, especially in a collision





MAINTAINING AWARENESS



A trainer should make sure that trainees:

- Pay **attention from the first moment**, as things can happen unexpectedly at any time
- Stay aware that rushing can cause accidents so always give **sufficient time for a journey**
- **Plan ahead – try to anticipate** conditions and adjust speed, gears, positioning etc. in advance
- Use a **problem-solving approach** when on the bike – spot what might go wrong and pick the best way to deal with it
- Take action to **avoid other people's mistakes** and know that everyone makes mistakes
- Show **patience and courtesy** on the road and acknowledge the same in others
- **Don't get distracted** by getting annoyed at the things others do
- Stay **VISIBLE**, be **PREDICTABLE**, cycle **STEADILY** and **STRAIGHT** and **COMMUNICATE** with signals and eye contact which can make people act much more considerately
- Are prepared to **SEE, HEAR, ASSESS, ACT**
- Are aware that motorists are usually looking for vehicles that cause risk to themselves; they **often don't notice cyclists and motorbike riders**
- Recognise that **drivers**, moving on to a main road from a slip road, **concentrate on the right**, looking for a safe gap in traffic and in doing so they can fail to see a cyclist crossing ahead, even if he or she has the right of way
- Are wary of **indicators** which are **often misused** – never trust an indicator, wait until the vehicle actually moves
- Remember that **drivers in side or slip roads, and at roundabouts**, may try to get out ahead, regardless of a cyclist's speed
- **dogs, children, buggies and footballs**, can all spell danger for a cyclist

REGULATIONS



A trainer should constantly remind trainees that:

- All cyclists should know the **Rules of the Road**
 - In general terms, for cyclists, this means:
 - ~ Having a bike that is in proper working order and that fits.
 - ~ **ALWAYS** stopping at a red traffic light.
 - ~ **ALWAYS** stopping at a STOP sign and yielding appropriately at a YIELD sign.
 - ~ **ALWAYS** stopping at pedestrian facilities (Zebra crossings, pedestrian lights etc.) if someone is crossing.
 - ~ **ALWAYS** cycling in the same direction as the rest of the traffic (i.e. on the left) when on the road or a bike lane.
 - ~ **ALWAYS** obeying lane markings, unbroken centre lines cannot be crossed.
 - ~ **ALWAYS** use hand signals to indicate your intentions.
 - ~ **Only** cycling on the path if there is a suitable bike facility there.
 - ~ **When turning left**, giving way to pedestrians who have started to cross the road.
 - ~ Only ride in **bus lanes** if there is a bike shown on the sign.
 - ~ Do not cycle in **contraflow bus lanes**.
 - ~ Never cycle on **motorways or bypasses**
 - ~ Cycling **no more than two abreast**, and, keeping to single file to facilitate flow of other vehicles in traffic, unless it is safer to prevent an overtake where the road is narrow, or there are parked vehicles causing a narrowing effect.
- Cyclists need to **obey the rules** for their own safety and the safety of others.
- A rider must **obey the instructions of a Garda**, a signal to stop by a **traffic warden** or **school crossing patrol**, and a signal to slow down or stop from a **person in charge of animals**.
- Remember that traffic on a **major road has right of way** over traffic on a minor road.
- While at times, it may be safe to **cycle two abreast**, a cyclist **must not obstruct other road users** or cycle side-by-side with more than one other cyclist



ON THE ROAD



Getting Ready

- **Look behind to be sure it is safe to place the bike on the road**
- **Look again** and then **get on the bike from the kerb side** or edge – as the bike will be leaning to that side, if balance is lost, the fall should be to the path instead of onto the road

Starting Off

- **Start by**
 - **getting the right pedal into the 2 O'Clock position**
 - **looking over the shoulder** for vehicles behind
 - when a suitable gap appears, **look forward**
 - look behind again
 - **look ahead** and **move off**
- **Start in a low gear**
 - at low speed a bike can **wobble**
 - handlebars can hit off a vehicle beside
 - get into a **low gear at stops** to prepare to **start steadily** again

On the Move

- Travel in the **same direction** as the rest of the traffic (i.e. on the left in Ireland)
- **Give way to pedestrians** crossing when you are turning from a major to a minor road
- **Look and signal** before any move made on the road, but remember that a signal is a **sign of intent** and always **be sure it is safe to move**
- **Look before stopping** to check traffic behind and stop in a safe way
- **Turning left on to a major road**, watch out for approaching **cars** on the major road who are **overtaking** and may be approaching the junction on the **wrong side**

- **Self check all around** before moving out or changing position on the road
- **Look ahead of any vehicle in front before overtaking**, for bends, obstructions and other dangers on the road
- Avoid **undertaking** or passing to left
 - **drivers** who are used to **checking** for overtaking traffic in there **right-hand wing** mirror may not check to the left
 - if drivers **move** left, the cyclist will be **squeezed**
 - a **door could open** into the rider's path
 - or **pedestrians**, thinking it is safe to cross when traffic is stopped, **may step out** in front of a moving cyclist
- **Don't get too close** to the back of another vehicle
 - a cyclist may be **less visible** to the driver there
 - they may **not be reflected** in the wing mirrors
 - they **won't be able to see the road** ahead
 - and they will be in the **danger zone** if the **driver suddenly brakes**
- **Never carry a passenger** unless the bike is built for more than one rider
- **Don't hold on to other cyclists or vehicles** when on their bikes
- If the road feels too busy or hard to negotiate, it is **ALWAYS RIGHT** to **get off and walk** with the bicycle like a pedestrian
- **Slow down** and don't startle **horses and other animals** with the bell when cycling near them, leaving plenty of room when passing by
- Try the following strategies for **dealing with dogs**
 - **A soft, gentle tone** may work
 - Or the opposite, a **sharp shout**
 - A **squirt from a water bottle** will often do the trick
- If **going the wrong way**, continue and only pull in or change lanes when there will no danger to anyone, including themselves
- Never **change direction** in an **unexpected way**
- If the bike **breaks down**, get off the road as quickly as possible



THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR



- **Exhaust fumes** coming from a stationary vehicle – it may be about to move off
- **Passengers moving on a bus** – it might be about to stop
- **The last passenger entering or leaving a bus** – it might be about to restart or someone may step out from in front of or behind it without checking for traffic
- Near junctions, the wheels of vehicles in front – drivers sometimes don't signal, but the **wheel direction/movement** can tell you where they are going
- **Stopped delivery vans** – the driver may be concentrating more on unloading than on a cyclist
- **Taxi drivers** – looking for a destination or the next fare might cut a cyclist up
- **Crowded cars** can distract a driver
- **Loose dogs** in a car can really affect a driver's concentration
- **Children** running out from between parked cars

VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION WHEN CYCLING IN A GROUP ON THE ROAD

Slowing

CALL: "Slowing" usually accompanied by a hand signal to indicate that the rider or riders are slowing down for some reason. For example, approaching a signal controlled junction.

HAND SIGNAL: Raise your arm, move up and down



Pothole or hazard

HAND SIGNAL: Extend arm (left or right depending on which side the hazard is on) pointing down at the road, to point out hazards such as pot holes, manhole covers etc. In the event of a pothole rider should shout "Hole" while pointing toward the hazard.



Stopping

CALL: "Stopping" usually accompanied by a hand signal to indicate that the rider or riders are stopping for some reason. For example, approaching a signal controlled junction.

HAND SIGNAL: Raise your arm, open palm



Glass or loose gravel or uneven ground

HAND SIGNAL: Extend arm (left or right depending on which side the hazard is on) with hand open and palm facing the ground. Move hand left and right to indicate gravel or uneven ground, etc.





MODULE

ON ROAD GENERAL

Wait

CALL: "Wait" typically at a junction to indicate there is a car coming or that it is unsafe to proceed.

"Wait"

Clear

CALL: "Clear" to indicate that a junction is traffic free or that it is safe to proceed. Rider must check themselves and not rely solely on others.

"Clear"

Single Out

CALL: "Single Out or Single File" to instruct riders to get into single file.

"Single Out"
or
"Single File"

Move Out

HAND SIGNAL: Bring hand behind the back (left or right depending on which side the obstruction is on) and wave or point behind back indicating that there is an obstruction such as a parked car or pedestrian, etc. Riders should move in the direction indicated to avoid the obstruction.



Puncture

CALL: "Puncture" to inform riders in the group that rider has got a puncture.

HAND SIGNAL: Raise your hand, stop pedalling and hold in a straight line until everyone has passed. When all the riders are ahead it is safe to pull over.

"Puncture"



Come through

HAND SIGNAL: Hands on the handlebars, flick your left or right elbow away from your body. Flick the elbow on the side that the following riders will come through on.



Car up

CALL: "Car Up" to warn riders that a car is approaching from the rear of the group. Riders should be prepared to single out if riding two abreast to accommodate the car(s) moving through.

"Car Up"

Car down

CALL: "Car Down" to warn riders that a car is approaching from the front of the group. Riders should be prepared to single out if riding two abreast to accommodate the car(s) coming down, particularly on narrow rural roads.

"Car Down"

Riders up

CALL: "Rider Up" to warn rider(s) that the rider(s) behind intend to pass. Riders should be prepared to move over or single out to accommodate the rider(s) coming through.

"Rider Up"