



## GENERAL POINTERS FOR CYCLING ON THE ROAD

- **Risk assess changing environments** over the course of the journey and take appropriate action
- **Rural areas** are different from **urban areas**, which are different in turn from **suburban areas**, so each environment will need to be assessed differently

## PLANNING FOR THE ROAD



- It is a good idea encourage individuals who are novice cyclists to look at traffic as 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
- The best **safety** devices on a bike are the **brain, eyes and ears**
- A **bike is small, slow and light** compared to other vehicles, especially in a collision

## 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





## MAINTAINING AWARENESS



- 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



- 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