

What's legal - and what's not - on your bike?

CTC volunteer Margaret-Anne Orgill takes a look at cyclists and the law.

Cyclists must not:

- Ride under the influence of drink or drugs
- Ride in a dangerous, careless or inconsiderate manner
- Carry a passenger unless the bike has been adapted to carry one, for example a bike with a child's seat
- Hold on to a moving vehicle or trailer
- Cycle on a pavement, unless it's a shared pavement or one with a cycle path on it
- Ride through red lights

Cyclists must:

- Have front and rear lights lit at night - flashing lights are now permitted
- Ensure their brakes are "efficient"

Here are several things it's legal to do while cycling - it's good to know these and they will help you cycle safely and assertively. Share these with your non-cycling driving friends, as the more motorists who know this the better! It is legal to:

- **Ride two abreast on a road** - you and your friend can pedal side by side. The Highway Code says you can't ride more than two abreast, though, and must ride in single file if the road is narrow or busy or when you are cycling around a bend.
- **Ride in the middle of the road** - this can be the safest place to be if the road is narrow as you will find it easiest to see and be seen. It also helps you avoid being hit by opening car doors if you're riding alongside a row of vehicles. Riding in the middle of the road can also help prevent dangerous overtaking - the Highway Code says road users should give cyclists as much space as they would when overtaking a car.
- **Ride outside the cycle lane** - the Highway Code advises using the lanes as they can be safer, but says it isn't compulsory and whether you decide to use them depends on your skill and experience.

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