

Cars and Bicycles – How to Safely Coexist

As spring slowly turns to summer, we see more people out walking dogs, running and riding bikes on the road. As avid cyclists, we love this time of year and try to get out often. As much as we enjoy riding bicycles, we are also very much aware of the risks involved. Already this year, Bedford lost two members of its running and cycling communities to accidents involving cars. In order to share the roads safely, here's a quick list for both drivers and cyclists to consider:

- **Driver Safety** – When overtaking a cyclist, NH law requires drivers to give cyclists at least 3 feet of space when passing, plus 1 foot for every 10 mph above 30 mph. Whenever possible, give cyclists as much room as possible BUT, please yield to oncoming cars! When another car is approaching in the oncoming lane, slow down behind the cyclist and pass when safe. It'll only take 15 more seconds to get where you're going.
- **Cyclists Rules** – Cyclists, earn respect on the road by following all traffic rules. Stop at stop signs and stop lights. Ride as far right as safely possible and get to single-file quickly if riding two-abreast when a car approaches from behind.
- **Cyclist Safety** – Use two lights, front and rear, and wear bright clothing! Cyclists using these strategies are 33% less likely to be involved in a collision (*Bicycling Magazine, June 2017*)
- **Two-way Communication** – Cyclists should use hand signals to alert drivers to turns and stops. In addition, especially when approaching a hill or curve, cyclists often have a better view of the road ahead than drivers and we can help drivers determine when it's not safe to pass by holding out an open-palm left hand. When the road is clear, wave the driver by. Drivers, we cyclists contend with road and wind noise in our helmets and may not always hear you approach from behind. Don't assume we're being rude; just give a short toot of your horn when you are well behind us and we'll move over. Please don't creep up on us and lean on your horn.
- **Empathy & Respect** – Most important is to treat everyone on the road with respect. Drivers, try to understand that cycling is inherently dangerous with many road hazards in our way as we ride. Help keep us safe by respecting the space around us. Cyclists, understand that it can be challenging for drivers to navigate around us and do your best to make it easy for the car to make the right decision.

Reprinted with permission by the authors Jeff Kerr & Michael Fedder. 6/6/2017