

TEXAS BIKE LAWS

These "rules of the road" are based on Texas Transportation Code statutes. Find the complete bicycle code at the bottom of the page. Laws are designed to improve the safety of everyone who uses the roadways. Don't become a statistic! Remember to always use hand signals and body actions to communicate with motorists and other bicyclists.

Bicyclists have the rights and duties of other vehicle operators: (§551.101)

Yes, this means you have to stop at stop signs and red lights, but cars are required to yield right-of-way to a bicycle when appropriate, just as to any other vehicle.

Ride near the curb and go in the same direction as other traffic: (§551.103)

Near the curb is subjective (we recommend leaving a cushion of about three feet) but the law gives a cyclist the right to take the lane when necessary for safety.

At least one hand on the handlebars (two are safer): (§551.102c)

One when signaling but two when turning works well.

Use hand and arm signals: (§545.107)

Point the way you are going, let the other operators know what you want to do.

One rider per saddle: (§551.102a)

Don't let your friends share your bike while riding unless you're both on a tandem.

You may ride two abreast as long as you don't impede traffic: (§551.103c)

Racing and taking the lane are special cases.

Must have a white light on the front and a red reflector or red light on the rear (for riding at night): (§551.104b)

The light is primarily so people can see you coming from the side, where their headlights do not shine on your reflectors. The law, effective as of Sept. 2001, states that a red light can replace a red reflector.

Brakes capable of making the braked wheel skid: (§551.104a)

Don't test that front brake to see if the wheel will skid while riding, especially down hill.

TEXAS TRANSPORTATION CODE

Sec. 545.107. Method of Giving Hand and Arm Signals

An operator who is permitted to give a hand and arm signal shall give the signal from the left side of the vehicle as follows:

to make a left turn signal, extend hand and arm horizontally;

to make a right turn signal, extend hand and arm upward, except that a bicycle operator may signal from the right side of the vehicle with the hand and arm extended horizontally; and

to stop or decrease speed, extend hand and arm downward.

Chapter 551. Operation of Bicycles, Mopeds, and Play Vehicles

Subchapter A. Application of Chapter

Sec. 551.001. Persons Affected

This chapter applies only to a person operating a bicycle on a highway; or a path set aside for the exclusive operation of bicycles.

Sec. 551.002. Moped Included

A provision of this subtitle applicable to a bicycle also applies to a moped, other than a provision that by its nature cannot apply to a moped.

Subchapter B. Regulation of Operation

Sec. 551.101. Rights and Duties

- (a) A person operating a bicycle has the rights and duties applicable to a driver operating a vehicle under this subtitle, unless a provision of this chapter alters a right or duty; or a right or duty applicable to a driver operating a vehicle cannot by its nature apply to a person operating a bicycle.
- (b) A parent of a child or a guardian of a ward may not knowingly permit the child or ward to violate this subtitle.

Sec. 551.102. General Operation

- (a) A person operating a bicycle shall ride only on or astride a permanent and regular seat attached to the bicycle.
- (b) A person may not use a bicycle to carry more persons than the bicycle is designed or equipped to carry.
- (c) A person operating a bicycle may not use the bicycle to carry an object that prevents the person from operating the bicycle with at least one hand on the handlebars of the bicycle.
- (d) A person operating a bicycle, coaster, sled, or toy vehicle or using roller skates may not attach either the person or the bicycle, coaster, sled, toy vehicle, or roller skates to a streetcar or vehicle on a roadway.

551.103. Operation on Roadway

- (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), a person operating a bicycle on a roadway who is moving slower than the other traffic on the roadway shall ride as near as practicable to the right curb or edge of the roadway, unless:
 - (1) the person is passing another vehicle moving in the same direction;
 - (2) the person is preparing to turn left at an intersection or onto a private road or driveway;

- (3) a condition on or of the roadway, including a fixed or moving object, parked or moving vehicle, pedestrian, animal, or surface hazard prevents the person from safely riding next to the right curb or edge of the roadway; or
- (4) the person is operating a bicycle in an outside lane that is:
 - (A) less than 14 feet in width and does not have a designated bicycle lane adjacent to that lane; or
 - (B) too narrow for a bicycle and a motor vehicle to safely travel side by side.
- (b) A person operating a bicycle on a one-way roadway with two or more marked traffic lanes may ride as near as practicable to the left curb or edge of the roadway.
- (c) Persons operating bicycles on a roadway may ride two abreast. Persons riding two abreast on a laned roadway shall ride in a single lane. Persons riding two abreast may not impede the normal and reasonable flow of traffic on the roadway. Persons may not ride more than two abreast unless they are riding on a part of a roadway set aside for the exclusive operation of bicycles.

Sec. 551.104. Safety Equipment

- (a) A person may not operate a bicycle unless the bicycle is equipped with a brake capable of making a braked wheel skid on dry, level, clean pavement.
- (b) A person may not operate a bicycle at nighttime unless the bicycle is equipped with:
 - (1) A lamp on the front of the bicycle that emits a white light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet in front of the bicycle; and
 - (2) on the rear of the bicycle:
 - (A) A red reflector that is:
 - (i) of a type approved by the department; and
 - (ii) visible when directly in front of lawful upper beams of motor vehicle headlamps from all distances from 50 to 300 feet to the rear of the bicycle; or
 - (B) lamp that emits a red light visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear of the bicycle.
 - (C) In addition to the reflector required by Subsection (b), a person operating a bicycle at nighttime may use a lamp on the rear of the bicycle that emits a red light visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear of the bicycle.