



TRAVELLING ON ESTONIAN ROADS AS A CYCLIST



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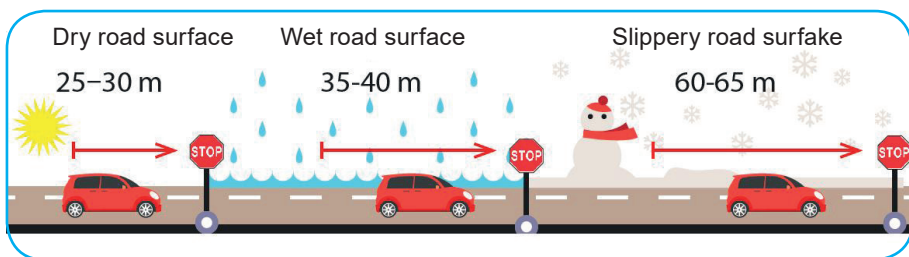
2018

DEAR ROAD USER,

Estonia has right-hand traffic and the traffic is regulated by the Traffic Act. The speed limit on the carriageway (rural roads) is 90 km/h and in cities and built-up areas (urban roads), 50 km/h. During summertime and if the traffic and road conditions are appropriate, the speed limit can be increased on some roads.

There are a lot of dark, rainy and misty days. Therefore, you ought to remember that when on our roads, you may not be visible to the drivers. To increase safety, it is beneficial for cyclists to wear brightly coloured clothes.

The wintertime is snowy and high snowdrifts can form at roadsides, and impair visibility. The sidewalk and carriageways are oftentimes slippery and cause the braking distance and therefore the stopping distance of vehicles to increase considerably.



The stopping distance in the case of 50 km/h (speed in a built-up area) depends on weather conditions.

As, unfortunately, a lot of accidents involving cyclists happen in Estonian towns and on our roads, we have compiled some tips and advice on how to prevent such accidents. The guide gives an overview of the traffic rules valid in Estonia and suggestions on how to travel safely as a cyclist. Important definitions are listed at the end of the material in order to help you better understand the text.

TRAVELLING ON ESTONIAN ROADS AS A CYCLIST

Travelling by bike is becoming increasingly popular in Estonia. Oftentimes riding a bicycle is the fastest and most economical transport method for traversing distances of up to 5 km. There are new cycle and pedestrian tracks built every year to make riding bikes even safer.

A cyclist is a driver and has to adhere to the same traffic rules as drivers of other vehicles when riding on a carriageway.

Children can ride their bikes on a carriageway from the age of 8 if they are accompanied by an adult. Children from the age of 10 are allowed to ride their bikes in a carriageway without an accompanying adult if they have a cyclist's permit. A cyclist's permit is mandatory for cyclists aged 10–15 if they ride on carriageways. Cyclist's permits are issued by service bureaus of the Road Administration.

OBLIGATIONS OF A CYCLIST

- Cyclists under the age of 16 have to wear a bicycle helmet that is fastened with straps.
- A cyclist can ride on a cycle track or cycle lane or as close to the far right side of the carriageway as possible, except when about to make a left turn, in the case of which the cyclist has to proceed to the lane nearest to the left side appropriate to the direction of traffic (unless traffic control devices indicate otherwise).
- A cyclist approaching an intersection by a cycle track or a cycle and pedestrian track has to slow down. A cyclist has to cross the carriageway at the speed of a pedestrian and without endangering pedestrians.

RESTRICTIONS FOR CYCLISTS

A cyclist must not:

- ride without holding the handle bar with two hands, except when giving a warning signal by hand;
- carry objects that hamper their driving or endanger other road users;
- carry a passenger who does not sit on the passenger saddle and does not wear a strapped helmet as required.

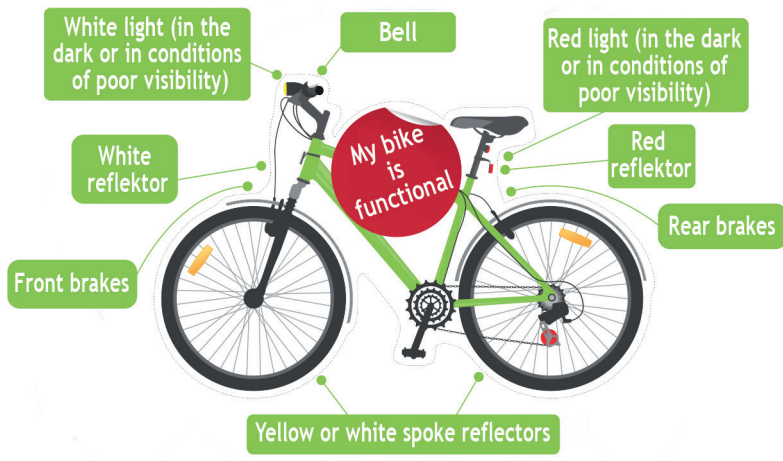
A FUNCTIONAL BIKE AND HELMET

To ensure safer travel, it is specified in the Traffic Act that a bicycle has to have the following:

- a white front reflector and a red rear reflector;
- at least 2 orange or white spoke reflectors;
- a bell;
- functional brakes.

Additionally, a white light in the front and a red light in the rear of your bike are necessary in the dark and in case of poor visibility.

It is necessary for a cyclist under the age of 16 to wear a bicycle helmet in the dark or in poor visibility.



A proper helmet should be:

- of the right size for the cyclist;
- in good condition;
- properly regulated and attached with straps.



For added comfort, get a helmet that is comfortable, lightweight and has ventilation.

A CYCLIST'S LOCATION ON THE ROAD

RIDING ON THE SIDE OF A CARRIAGEWAY

At the side of a carriageway, cyclists are required to drive in the same direction as other vehicles. At the side of the carriageway, cyclists should keep to as far right of the road as they can. If there are multiple cyclists, they should ride in a single file.



The photograph shows cyclists riding on the right side of the carriageway, in a single file and keeping the required distance

When riding on a bike, it is necessary to adhere to traffic rules and notify others of your planned manoeuvres with hand signals, so that other drivers would know what you are planning to do as a cyclist.

- If there is no separate cycle and pedestrian track at the side of the carriageway, be sure to ride on the far right side of the road.
- Ride in a single file when at the side of a carriageway.
- Make yourself clearly visible to drivers in traffic.
- Wear brightly coloured clothes or a safety vest.

When a cyclist is currently pushing their bike next to them, they are considered to be a pedestrian and must adhere to rules set for pedestrians. An exception applies in the case that a cyclist is pushing their bike at a carriageway – they are required to be on the right side of the road. When pushing a bike or some other vehicle, it is required to move in the same direction as the vehicles on the road, otherwise the lights of the pushed vehicle may confuse other drivers.

RIDING IN THE CYCLE LANE

A **cycle lane** is a longitudinal strip of a carriageway indicated by road surface marking and designated for cycles, mini mopeds and mopeds.



This “Cycle track” traffic sign is used to mark a cycle lane and a separate cycle track. The traffic sign may be at the side of the road or marked on the road surface.

As the cycle lane is a part of the carriageway, cyclists riding in the cycle lane have to adhere to the same rules as drivers on the carriageway.



The photograph shows a cyclist riding in the cycle lane at the carriageway.

RIDING ON THE CYCLE TRACK

A **cycle track** is a part of a road separated from the carriageway by structural means or an independent part of a road or an independent road, designated for cycles, segways, mini mopeds and mopeds and signposted as such.



When a cycle track and carriageway intersect, the driver on the carriageway has the right of way. A cyclist can cross the carriageway while riding on a bike, but they can only do so when riding at the speed of a pedestrian.

RIDING ON A CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRACK

A **cycle and pedestrian track** is a separate road or part of a road designated for cycles, segways, self-driving delivery robots and pedestrians. The tracks might have various signposts and markings, you should pay attention to traffic control devices. When riding a bicycle on a cycle and pedestrian track, it is not necessary to have a cyclist's permit.

Cycle and pedestrian tracks can have various markings.



It is most common to use the option where pedestrians and cyclists can move in the same space. When passing through pedestrians, slow down to their speed. In order to pass a pedestrian, use your bell, if necessary, slow down and pass them by at a safe distance. Keep to the right side of the road.



It is also common to use the option where a line separates the side of the track meant for pedestrians from the side meant for cyclists. Choose the right side of the road when riding on a bike and keep to the right edge of the road. Always pass others in front of you from the left side.



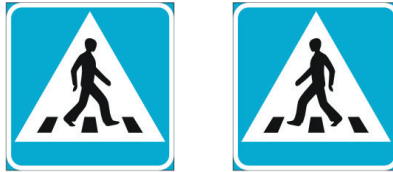
If the previous traffic signs have been crossed out with a red line, this indicates that the signified road has ended and the road traffic rules of normal traffic apply once again.

CROSSING THE CARRIAGEWAY ON A BIKE

A cyclist may cross a carriageway while riding a bike, but it is safer to get off of the bike and cross the carriageway as a pedestrian. When going on bike rides with children, we recommend that you always step off your bike before crossing a carriageway, as this leaves time for the child to make sure that it is safe to cross the carriageway. When crossing the carriageway on a bike, be sure to slow down to the speed of pedestrians. Prior to crossing a carriageway, make sure that it is completely safe to do so.

CROSSING A CARRIAGEWAY AT A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

A pedestrian crossing is marked with the following traffic signs and road surface markings.



A pedestrian crossing is a part of the road that is designated for pedestrians to cross the carriageway, cycle track or tramway track and signposted as such or marked by respective road surface marking, where the drivers are obliged to give way to pedestrians.



A pedestrian crossing is regulated if the sequence of traffic is determined by the pedestrian traffic light signals or signals given by an authorised official. Pedestrian crossings are unregulated in all other cases. A carriageway may be crossed at an unregulated pedestrian crossing by riding a cycle or driving a segway but the cyclist or the segway driver have no right of way to the driver of a vehicle, save where the cyclist or segway driver cross at a pedestrian crossing on a carriageway on to which the driver of the vehicle is turning. Cyclists and segway drivers crossing a carriageway at a pedestrian crossing may not endanger pedestrians crossing it.

Drivers on the carriageway are obligated to give way to pedestrians and cyclists (who are pushing their bike at their side) who want to cross the carriageway on the pedestrian crossing. Prior to stepping onto the carriageway, make sure that the drivers have noticed you and that it is safe to cross the road.

When crossing the carriageway on a bike, be sure to slow down to the speed of pedestrians. Cyclists may not endanger pedestrians. On streets with high traffic intensity, it is better to get off of your bike and walk beside it.

As an exception, a driver on the carriageway has to give way to a cyclist if the cyclist is crossing a road onto which the driver is about to turn to. Even though a driver who is completing a turn is required to give way to a cyclist, it is very important that the cyclist makes sure that the driver has seen them and that it is safe to cross the road prior to crossing the carriageway. The easiest way to verify that a driver has noticed you is to create eye-contact with them. It is very dangerous to ride onto the carriageway with a lot of speed, as that way the driver won't have enough time to react and prevent a traffic accident.

CROSSING A CARRIAGEWAY AT A CROSSING

A crossing is a part of a road that is designated for crossing the carriageway, cycle track or tramway track, constructed in a comprehensible way and marked as such, where the person crossing the road has no right of way to drivers. At a crossing, the carriageway can be crossed without getting off your bike. Cyclists and segway drivers crossing a carriageway at a crossing shall not jeopardise pedestrians crossing it.



A photograph of a crossing.

A crossing does not have the road surface marking characteristic to a pedestrian crossing. When crossing a carriageway at a crossing, it is necessary to be very careful and attentive as drivers on the carriageway are not required to give way to pedestrians or cyclists.

A CARRIAGEWAY INTERSECTING WITH A CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRACK

When a carriageway intersects with a cycle and pedestrian track, it is necessary to slow down and, if necessary, stop before crossing the carriageway. Road users on a cycle and pedestrian track have to give way to drivers on the carriageway when crossing the carriageway. The carriageway should be crossed at the speed of a pedestrian.



The cyclist in the photo is riding on a cycle and pedestrian track that intersects with a carriageway.

Oftentimes, the cycle and pedestrian track will end before the carriageway and begin again after the intersection. The photo above illustrates the same situation. In this case, the cyclist has to be especially attentive and get off of their bike. The broken line in the photograph marks the centre line of the road. Keep to the right side of the road, that way it is easier for those who wish to pass you to do so.

CROSSING A CARRIAGEWAY THROUGH A PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL

Streets with high traffic intensity often have pedestrian tunnels that allow to get to the other side of the road in a safer manner. Pedestrian underpasses can be installed in the form of stairs or ramps.



If the traffic sign indicates a ramp like the signs above, cyclists will find the road convenient to use as well. You should pay attention to pedestrians while doing so and make sure that you are moving at the speed of a pedestrian when riding among pedestrians.



The photograph shows a cycle and pedestrian track that splits into two.

The right side of the road takes you to the other side of the road via a tunnel. If you stay on the left side of the road, you will be able to keep moving straight ahead. The entrance of the tunnel is also marked on a traffic sign placed at the right side of the road.

TRAVERSING A LEVEL CROSSING

If a cyclist is riding on a carriageway and has to cross a level crossing, they should always make sure that there is no train approaching. The train always has right of way! If there is red light flashing in the traffic lights of a level crossing that means that it is prohibited to cross the level crossing at that time. The intersection of a carriageway and a railway is called a level crossing. It is recommended to cross the railway as perpendicularly as possible, this ensure that the risk of falling is kept low.

Pedestrians are to cross railways at railway level crossings for pedestrians. If a cyclist wishes to cross the railway at a railway level crossing for pedestrians, they are always required to get off of their bike and cross the tracks while pushing their bike by their side.



The photograph is of a railway level crossing for pedestrians.

Metal barriers have been installed at railway level crossings for pedestrians in order to increase safety, so that no-one can carelessly walk or drive onto the tracks. Walk between the barriers, not around them. A railway level crossing for pedestrians is marked with the corresponding traffic sign.

RIDING IN THE DARK

It is recommended that you make yourself clearly visible both during daylight hours and when it's dark outside. A cyclist can make themselves more visible by wearing brightly coloured clothes and a safety vest when it's dark outside. It is not mandatory to wear a safety vest, but it is strongly recommended that you do so on roads that are not well-lit.



The photograph shows a comparison of a cyclist in a safety vest and a cyclist in dark clothing in the dark

The cyclist in brightly coloured clothing is visible to drivers from far away, thereby giving them more time to take the cyclist's presence on the road into account. The cyclist in dark clothing is very poorly visible and blends into the background.

In addition to a cyclist's clothing, it is also important that their bike has functional reflectors and lights that help make the bike more visible when it's dark outside.

A bicycle is required to have a white light in the front and a red light in the rear when it is dark outside.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR CHILDREN RIDING ON BYCICLES

Children of all ages are allowed to ride their bikes on cycle and pedestrian tracks and on sidewalks, so that they can learn how to behave in traffic, to take others into account and be aware of dangers. Parents have the important task of explaining traffic matters to children, while out in traffic with them, so that the children can understand it.

A child's bike has to meet the same requirements as stipulated on page 3.

Cyclists under the age of 16 have to wear a bicycle helmet, which has to be in the right size and properly fastened. The helmet has to be of the right size for the child and be worn properly. Children sitting in a bike seat or a bike trailer have to wear helmets as well.

A person under the age of 13 can ride on the sidewalk. Up to two adults accompanying a child on a bike can be ride their bikes on the sidewalk as well. A cyclist driving a toddler in a bike seat can ride on the sidewalk.

Children can only be given rides in designated bike seats. There are different suitable seats, but in general their load capacity is 22–25 kg. A child riding in a bike seat of bike trailer has to be wearing a helmet that meets the requirements.

Children from the age of 8 can ride their bike on a carriageway only under the direct supervision of an adult. Children from the age of 10 are allowed to ride on the carriageway without an adult accompanying them if they have a bicycle driver's licence. A cyclist's permit is mandatory for children aged 10–15 year if they are riding on a carriageway.

WARNING SIGNS



111 “Regulated level crossing” indicates to the road user that they are approaching a regulated level crossing;

112 “Unregulated level crossing” indicates to the road user that they are approaching an unregulated level crossing;

131 “Tramway crossing” indicates to the road user that the road is about to intersect with a tramway;

132 “Intersection of the roads of the same category” indicates to the road user that they are approaching an intersection where the driver has to give way to a driver on the right or approaching from the right. This sign, when placed in front of an intersection of a paved road and a gravel road or earth-track or an intersection of a paved road and a gravel road deems those roads to be roads of the same category;

133 “Intersection of non-priority road” indicates to the road user that the non-priority road is about to intersect with a priority road or about to merge with it;

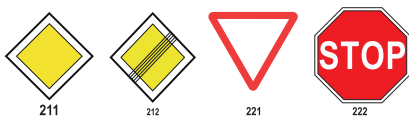
171 “There is an unregulated pedestrian crossing ahead” indicates to the road user that there is a unregulated pedestrian crossing ahead;

172 “Pedestrians” indicates to the road user that they are approaching a section of the road where pedestrians often cross the road outside of a pedestrian crossing or where pedestrians move about on the carriageway or at the side of it;

173a “Children” indicates to the road user that they are approaching a road section where children often step onto the road;

174 “Cycle track crossing” indicates to the road user that the road is about to intersect with a cycle track or cycle and pedestrian track, or a section where, at the end of a cycle track, cyclists, moped or mini moped drivers head to the carriageway, or in the case of a cycle and pedestrian track, cyclists are about to head to the carriageway;

RIGHT-OF-WAY SIGNS



211 “Priority road” indicates a road on which drivers have a right of way on a unregulated intersection concerning a driver driving on a non-priority road;

212 “End of priority road” indicates the ending of a road marked with the 211 “Priority road” traffic sign;

212 “Give way” indicates that the driver is obligated to give way to the driver driving on the intersecting road. The traffic sign on the priority road also indicates the end of the priority road;

212 “Stop and give way” indicates that the driver is obligated to stop in front of the stop line, if there is no line – in front of the edge of the intersecting road, in other cases – in front of the relevant traffic sign.

PROHIBITORY SIGNS



331 “Closed to all vehicles” prohibits traffic of all vehicles;

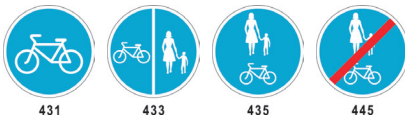
321 “No driving on a bike” prohibits traffic of bikes, mopeds and mini mopeds;

324 “No pedestrians” prohibits traffic of pedestrians. The sign only applies on the side of the road on which it has been placed;

333 “No left turn” prohibits left turns only on that intersection of carriageways in front of which it has been placed. This sign does not prohibit U-turns;

334 “No U-turns” prohibits U-turns. This sign does not prohibit left turns.

MANDATORY SIGNS



431 “Cycle track” indicates that cyclists, segway, moped and mini moped drivers are allowed to drive on the track. If the level of traffic intensity enables, pedestrians are also allowed on this track if they do not hinder the traffic of bikes, segways, mopeds or mini mopeds;

433 “Cycle and pedestrian track” indicates that pedestrians, cyclists and drivers of segways are allowed; 435 “Cycle and pedestrian track” indicates that pedestrians, cyclists and drivers of segways are allowed. Cyclists and pedestrians can use the same space, it is recommended to keep to the right side of the road;

445 “End of the cycle and pedestrian track”.

SPECIAL REGULATION SIGNS



543 “Pedestrian crossing” indicates to a unregulated pedestrian crossing;

521 “One-way road” indicates a road or carriageway, on which vehicles drive in one direction only;

573 “Calm traffic area” indicates a place where the road traffic rules set for a calm traffic area start to apply;

571 “Built-up area” indicates a place where the road traffic rules set for a built-up area start to apply.

A BUILT-UP AREA is a developed area that has entry and exit roads equipped with road signs establishing the road traffic rules applicable in the built-up area.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS are electric devices used on roads to regulate traffic by using light signals.

POOR VISIBILITY is a temporary situation caused by weather or another phenomenon (fog, rain, snow, snowstorm, twilight, smoke, dust, water and mud splashes, sun glare) in which objects on the road are indistinguishable from their background at more than 300 meters.

A REFLEX REFLECTOR is a means for increasing the visibility of a person or another object in darkness by reflection of light from that means towards the light source, visible in the illumination of the dipped-beam headlamps at a distance of at least 150 metres and of the main-beam headlamps at a distance of at least 300 metres.

A CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRACK is a separate road or part of a road designated for cycles, segways and pedestrians and signposted as such. A cycle and pedestrian track is a part of the road at an intersection of carriageways.

A PEDESTRIAN is a person involved in traffic on foot, in a wheelchair, on roller-skates, a skateboard, etc. a cyclist is also a pedestrian, if pushing a bicycle by their side.

A FOOTPATH is a separate road for pedestrians and segways, which may be signposted as such.

A DRIVER is a person who is operating a vehicle (e.g. a bicycle, motorcycle, automobile).

A SIDEWALK is a part of the road on which pedestrians travel.

A ROAD USER is a pedestrian or driver participating in traffic.

DARK TIME is the period of time between nightfall and dawn when visibility is less than 300 metres due to the lack of natural light.

A TRAIN is a unit of coupled railway vehicles, which is marked with visible train signals and consists of carriages and one or several locomotives or railcars.

A PASSENGER is a person who is travelling with a car or bus as the passenger.

A VEHICLE is a mobile machine powered by an engine or some other way.

A CARRIAGEWAY is a part of the road for vehicles to travel on.

A SEGWAY is a self-balancing two-wheel one-axle vehicle for carrying one person and powered by electricity;

A ROAD is a structure opened for traffic by pedestrians and vehicles. A road also comprises shoulders, dividing strips and green area strips. Roads may be paved roads, gravel roads or earth-tracks depending on the upper layer.

A TRAM is a rail vehicle for carrying passengers, with or without a rail-borne trailer, which runs on a track and is connected to an overhead electric wire.

A TROLLEYBUS is a motor vehicle for carrying passengers, which is connected to an overhead electric wire and has more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat.

A ZEBRA CROSSING is a part of the road designed for crossing the carriageway.

A CALM TRAFFIC AREA is a road designed for the common traffic of pedestrians and vehicles where the speed of vehicles is reduced by structural or other means and where entry and exit roads are signposted as such.

A PUBLIC TRANSPORT VEHICLE is a bus, trolleybus or tram providing the public transport service or an automobile intended to provide the public transport service.

A CROSSING is a part of the road that is designated for pedestrians to cross the carriageway, cycle track or tramway track, constructed in a comprehensible way and marked as such, where the pedestrians have no right of way to drivers, except if a pedestrian crosses the carriageway on a crossing on which the driver is turning to. A carriageway may be crossed at a crossing by riding a cycle or driving a segway but the cyclist or the segway driver have no right of way to the driver of a vehicle, save where the cyclist or the segway driver use a crossing on a carriageway on to which the driver is turning. Cyclists and segway drivers crossing a carriageway at a crossing shall not jeopardise pedestrians crossing it.

A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING is a part of the road that is designated for pedestrians to cross the carriageway, cycle track or tramway track and signposted as such or marked by respective road surface marking, where the drivers are obliged to give way to pedestrians. A pedestrian crossing is regulated if the sequence of traffic is determined by the pedestrian traffic light signals or signals given by an authorised official. Pedestrian crossings are unregulated in all other cases. A carriageway may be crossed at an unregulated pedestrian crossing by riding a cycle or driving a segway but the cyclist or the segway driver have no right of way to the driver of a vehicle, save where the cyclist or segway driver cross at a pedestrian crossing on a carriageway on to which the driver of the vehicle is turning. Cyclists and segway drivers crossing a carriageway at a pedestrian crossing may not jeopardise pedestrians crossing it.

SUMMARY OF WHAT TO REMEMBER

A cyclist is a driver and has to adhere to the same traffic rules as drivers of other vehicles when riding on a carriageway.

Children can ride their bikes on a carriageway from the age of 8 if they are accompanied by an adult. Children from the age of 10 are allowed to ride their bikes in a carriageway without an accompanying adult if they have a cyclist's permit. A cyclist's permit is mandatory for cyclists aged 10–15 if they ride on carriageways.

Cyclists under the age of 16 have to wear a bicycle helmet that is fastened with straps.

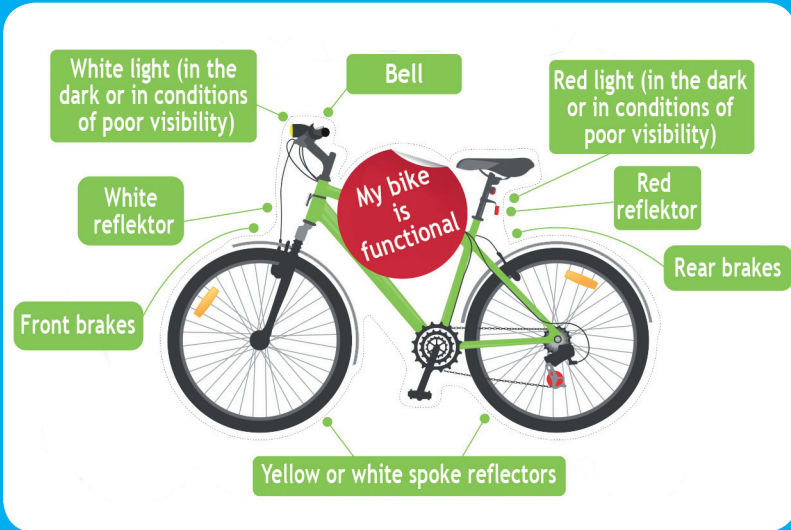
A cyclist approaching an intersection with a carriageway on a cycle track or a cycle and pedestrian track has to slow down. A cyclist has to cross the carriageway at the speed of a pedestrian and without endangering pedestrians.

Always keep to the right side of the road when riding on a carriageway.
When riding with other cyclists, ride in a single file.

You should always be very attentive when on an intersection.
If there are no right-of-way signs on an intersection that means that you have to give way to the driver approaching from the right.
If there are right-of-way signs on an intersection, then the driver on the priority side has the right of way.

Always follow traffic rules and set an example to your children!

Before heading out on a ride, always make sure that your bike is in good working order!



Make yourself visible in traffic and notify others of your actions!



The cyclist wishes to
turn left



The cyclist wishes to turn
right

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