

# SafeDriver Monthly Newsletter

May 2024



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## Bicycle Safety Awareness Month: Sharing the Road Safely

May is Bicycle Safety Awareness Month, a critical time to reinforce the importance of safely sharing the road with cyclists. As more cyclists take to the streets in warmer weather, drivers must remain vigilant and respectful of their presence. Here are some essential guidelines for drivers:

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### **1. Understanding Cyclists' Rights:**

Cyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as other vehicles on the road. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), "Bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists and are subject to the same rules and regulations." Drivers should treat cyclists with the same courtesy and respect as any other road user.

## 2. Giving Ample Space:

When passing cyclists, provide them with plenty of room. The NHTSA recommends leaving at least three feet of space between your vehicle and the cyclist. However, more space is preferable, particularly at higher speeds. The NHTSA advises, "The more room you can give bicyclists, the better."

## 3. Check Blind Spots:

Always check your blind spots before making any maneuvers, such as turning or changing lanes. Cyclists can be harder to spot than larger vehicles, so it's essential to take extra care. "Check for bicyclists before opening your door or pulling out from a parking space," recommends the NHTSA.

## 4. Use Caution at Intersections:

Intersections are high-risk areas for accidents involving cyclists. Always yield to cyclists when turning, and be aware of their presence before proceeding through an intersection. "Watch for cyclists when turning left or right," advises the NHTSA.

## 5. Be Patient:

Cyclists may not maintain the same speed as motor vehicles, especially on uphill climbs or in adverse weather conditions. Remain patient and avoid aggressive driving behaviors such as tailgating or honking. "Be patient and pass bicyclists only when safe to do so," suggests the NHTSA.



## 6. Look for Cyclists When Opening Doors:

Before opening your door after parking on the side of the road, check for approaching cyclists. "Look for bicyclists before opening your car door," emphasizes the NHTSA (NHTSA, 2023). This simple step can prevent "dooring" accidents that cause serious injuries.

## 7. Promote Visibility:

Encourage cyclists to enhance their visibility with bright, reflective clothing and lights, especially when riding in low-light conditions. "Use lights and reflectors at night and in low-light conditions," recommends the NHTSA (NHTSA, 2023). Increased visibility reduces the risk of accidents.

## 8. Educate Yourself:

Familiarize yourself with local cycling laws and regulations to ensure compliance and safe interactions between drivers and cyclists. "Learn and obey local traffic laws," advises the NHTSA (NHTSA, 2023). Knowledge of the rules of the road promotes safer travel for everyone.

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By adhering to these guidelines and remaining attentive behind the wheel, drivers can contribute to safer roads for cyclists and all road users. Let's work together to prioritize safety and mutual respect on our roadways.

