

# A Guide To Frequently Asked Questions



BICYCLES AND VEHICLES



VER 2.0



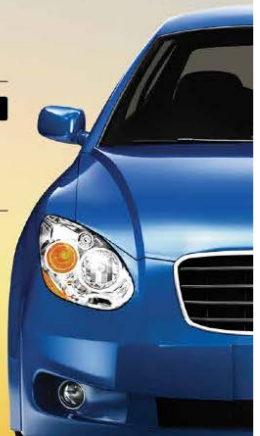


MOVE OVER  
**3 FEET**

FOR CYCLISTS

**IT'S THE LAW**

**ZERO Fatalities**



★ Share the Road ★



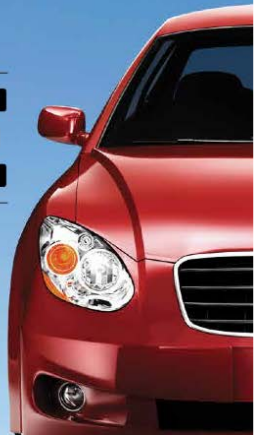
MOVE OVER  
**1 LANE**

FOR CYCLISTS

ON MULTI-LANE ROADS

**IT'S THE LAW**

**ZERO Fatalities**





For more information on Nevada's  
Bicycle Safety and Education Programs,

Contact:

Nevada Department of Transportation  
Bicycle and Pedestrian Program

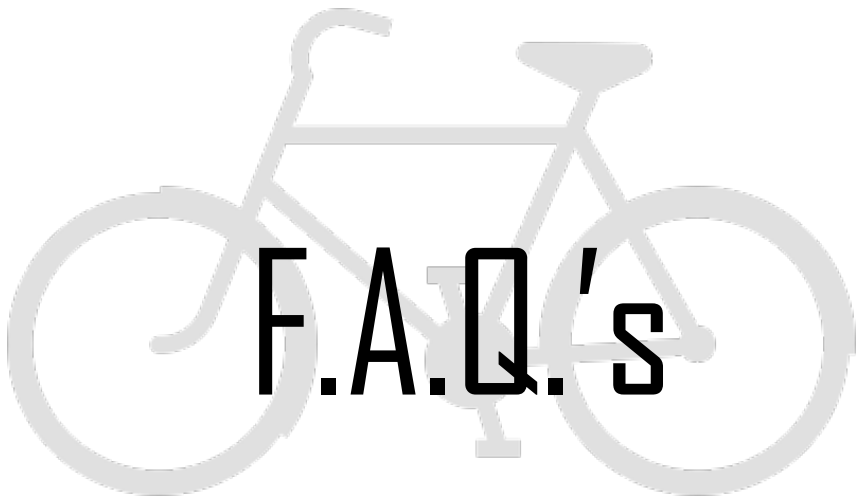
(775) 888-RIDE (7433)



# Cycling In Nevada

Nevada is a wonderful place to bicycle. Whether your riding preference is on a roadway or down a dirt trail, Nevada's wide-open spaces and scenic beauty lends itself to top notch cycling. Nevada's bicycling clubs and organizations, many of them with heritages back to the early days of the State, offer the opportunity for camaraderie, socializing and safety in numbers.

If you like an organized approach, each year Nevada offers numerous bicycling events for all types of riders in all types of terrains. Check with local bicycle shops, retailers and clubs for events and organized rides throughout the state.



# F.A.Q.'s

This booklet discusses many of the bicycling questions most often asked by the public.



## Q1: Is a bicycle a vehicle?

A: No, a Bicycle, as defined under Nevada's laws, is not a vehicle.

"Bicycle" means a device propelled by human power upon which a person may ride, having two tandem wheels either of which is over 14 inches in diameter, or every such device generally recognized as a bicycle though equipped with two front or two rear wheels except a moped.  
(NRS 484A.025)

"Electric bicycle" means a device upon which a person may ride, having two or three wheels, or every such device generally recognized as a bicycle that has fully operable pedals and is propelled by a small electric engine which produces not more than 1 gross brake horsepower and which produces not more than 750 watts final output, and:

1. Is designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground but is not a tractor; and
2. Powered solely by such a small electric engine, is capable of a maximum speed of not more than 20 miles per hour on a flat surface while carrying an operator who weighs 170 pounds.

The term does not include a moped.  
(NRS 484B.017)

The definition of a vehicle specifically excludes "devices moved by human power".

"Vehicle" means every device in, upon or by which any person or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a highway, except:

1. Devices moved by human power or used exclusively upon stationary rails; and
2. Electric personal assistive mobility devices as defined in NRS 482.029.  
(NRS 484A.320)



## Q2: Can a bicyclist ride in the travel lanes with vehicles?

A: Yes. When upon a roadway, bicyclists have the same rights, and must follow the same rules (as applicable), as motor vehicles drivers.

Every person riding a bicycle or an electric bicycle upon a roadway has all of the rights and is subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle except as otherwise provide in NRS 484B.767 to 484B.783 inclusive, and except as to those provisions of Chapters 484A to 484E, inclusive, of NRS which by their nature can have no application.

(NRS 484B.763)

Please note that:

“Roadway” means that portion of a highway which is improved and ordinarily used for vehicular traffic, exclusive of the shoulder.

(NRS 484A.220)

## Q3: Should a bicyclist ride in a Bicycle Lane or roadway shoulder if available?

A: Yes. Bicyclists should always take advantage of opportunities to ride in the safest roadway position available. Most bicyclists will prefer to ride as far from passing traffic as possible even though there is no law that obligates a bicyclist to only use a shoulder or bicycle lane. Lanes specifically designed for bicycles, designated by markings and/or signage as a designated “Bicycle Lane”, should be used whenever available. While not specifically engineered for travel, shoulders of 4 or more feet in width may provide added safety for bicyclists while allowing for vehicular flow. When roadway conditions require a bicyclist to share a mixed travel lane with vehicles, care should be taken, and unless making a turn or going at a comparable rate of speed, a bicyclist needs to ride as far to the right as is practicable within the travel lanes (“Roadway” is defined under NRS 484A.220, see Q2 above). All roadway users should use every opportunity to share the road with others.

Every person operating a bicycle or an electric bicycle upon a roadway shall, except:

- (a) When traveling at a lawful rate of speed commensurate with the speed of any nearby traffic;
  - (b) When preparing to turn left; or
  - (c) When doing so would not be safe,
- ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable, exercising due care when passing a standing vehicle or one proceeding in the same direction.

(NRS 484B.777)



Bicyclists should be courteous to other roadway users and should never ride more than two abreast in the roadway (travel lanes).

Persons riding bicycles or electric bicycles upon a roadway shall not ride more than two abreast except on paths or parts of roadways set aside for the exclusive use of bicycles or electric bicycles.

(NRS 484B.777)

## Q4: Can a motor vehicle operate in a bicycle lane?

A: No. Motor vehicles may not operate within bicycle lanes except under special circumstances.

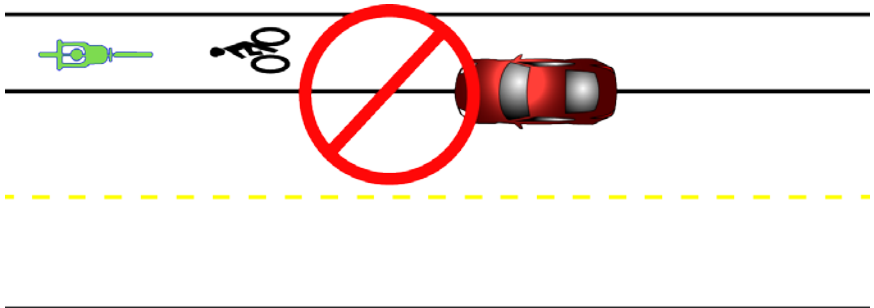
The driver of a motor vehicle shall yield the right-of-way to any person riding a bicycle or an electric bicycle on the pathway or lane. The driver of a motor vehicle shall not enter, stop, stand, park or drive within a pathway or lane provided for bicycles or electric bicycles except:

- (a) When entering or exiting an alley or driveway;
- (b) When operating or parking a disabled vehicle;
- (c) To avoid conflict with other traffic;
- (d) In the performance of official duties;
- (e) In compliance with the directions of a police officer; or
- (f) In an emergency.

(NRS 484B.270)

Except as otherwise provided (above), the driver of a motor vehicle shall not enter or proceed through an intersection while driving within a pathway or lane provided for bicycles or electric bicycles.

(NRS 484B.270)



## Q5. How may a rider carry belongings or other necessities while bicycling?

- A. Riders may carry belongings as long as they maintain at least one hand on the handlebars at all times. If needed, riders may need to use a backpack or panniers to assist them in bicycling when carrying articles.

No person operating a bicycle or an electric bicycle shall carry any package, bundle or article which prevents the driver from keeping at least one hand upon the handle bars. (NRS 484B.780)

## Q6. What is required to ride a bicycle at night?

- A. Nevada law requires the following for bicycling at night:
- A white headlight
  - A red rear reflector
  - Reflectors on each side

**NOTE: A rear taillight does not eliminate the need for a rear red reflector under the law.**

Every bicycle or electric bicycle when in use at night must be equipped with:

- (a) A lamp on the front which emits a white light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet to the front;
- (b) A red reflector on the rear of a type approved by the Department which must be visible from 50 feet to 300 feet to the rear when directly in front of lawful lower beams of headlamps on a motor vehicle; and
- (c) Reflective material of a sufficient size and reflectivity to be visible from both sides of the bicycle for 600 feet when directly in front of the lawful lower beams of the headlamps of a motor vehicle, or in lieu of such material, a lighted lamp visible from both sides from a distance of at least 500 feet.

(NRS 484B.783)

## **Q7. When are lights required?**

A. Nevada law specifically defines when lighting is required:

Every vehicle upon a highway of this State, must display lighted lamps and illuminating devices as respectively required in this chapter.

(a) At any time from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise;

(b) At any other time when, because of insufficient light or unfavorable atmospheric conditions, persons and vehicles on the highway are not clearly discernible at a distance of 1,000 feet ahead; and

(c) When directed by an official traffic control device.

(NRS 484D.100)

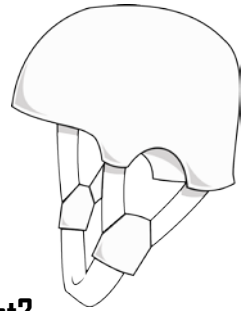
## **Q8. Can a bicyclist ride on a sidewalk?**

A. Yes (subject to location). There is no State law that prohibits a bicyclist from riding on the sidewalk, however, there may be local laws (ordinances, municipal codes, etc.) that prohibit bicyclists in certain locations or under certain conditions. Bicyclists need to check with the local jurisdiction (city, county, etc.) before they attempt to ride on a sidewalk.



If you do choose to ride upon a sidewalk, and the local jurisdiction allows it, please ride with caution. A few tips if you choose to ride on a sidewalk:

1. **GO SLOW-** Remember that there will be pedestrians on the sidewalk too. Pedestrians may be moving slower than a bicyclist.
2. **MAKE OTHER USERS AWARE-** Use an audible warning when approaching a pedestrian. Use a bell or a verbal warning to alert the pedestrian that you are behind them. Only pass on the left and only once you are sure the pedestrian is aware of your presence. Be courteous.
3. **DRIVEWAYS-** Every driveway is a potential conflict point when riding upon a sidewalk. Cars backing out of their driveway will not be used to looking for bikes crossing behind them at a faster speed than a pedestrian. Use caution as you cross these points.
4. **CROSS AT CROSSWALKS-** If you are traveling on the sidewalk you may end up at a marked or unmarked pedestrian crosswalk. Be courteous and dismount when using these pedestrian facilities
5. **BE PREDICTABLE-** Avoid transitioning repeatedly from sidewalk to roadway as this movement is unpredictable and unsafe.



## Q9. Does Nevada law require a bicyclist to wear a helmet?

- A. No. There is no law that requires a rider, no matter age, to wear a helmet in Nevada. Wearing a helmet is highly recommended for rider safety. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) statistics estimate that nationally, 9 out of 10 bicyclists killed were not wearing their helmets and despite this stat only 20-25% of all bicyclists wear a helmet. While common misconception is that most bicycle crashes involve children, 83% of bicyclists fatalities were riders over 20 years old. While there may not be a law in place to wear a helmet, it is a proven component of any safe bicycle ride no matter the riders age.

## Q10. Can a bicyclist receive a citation for traffic violations?

- A. Yes. A bicyclist can receive a citation if they are not following applicable state and local laws. As outlined in Question 2, a bicyclist is subject to all duties applicable to a driver of a vehicle.

(NRS 484B.763)



## Q11. Should a bicyclist ride with traffic or against it?

- A. With traffic. You should always ride **with traffic** when upon a road way. Riding with traffic is a predictable movement that motor vehicle drivers will expect. Be predictable, avoid erratic movements, swerving, riding in and out of parked cars and be courteous to other roadway users.

1. Upon all highways of sufficient width a vehicle must be driven upon the right half of the highway, except as follows:

- (a) When overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction under the laws governing such movements;
- (b) When the right half of the highway is closed to traffic;
- (c) Upon a highway divided into three lanes for traffic under the laws applicable thereon;
- (d) Upon a highway designated and posted for one-way traffic; or
- (e) When the highway is not of sufficient width.

(NRS 484B.200)

## Q12. What should a bicyclist check on their bike before heading out for a ride?

A. Bicyclists should always perform an “ABC Quick Check” before riding.  
The ABC's are:

**A- Air;** check if there is sufficient air in the tires, also check that tire treads are in good condition and not showing signs of wear or damage. Bicycle tires need to be inflated weekly as they will naturally lose air over time.

**B- Brakes;** make sure the brakes are in good operation and shape and when force is applied to your brake levers. They should stop the tire's rotation. Check brake pads for wear.

**C- Chain;** Check the chain. Pull the chain from a section of the chain ring to inspect tension. A large amount of slack in the chain indicates needed adjustment or replacement is needed.

**Quick;** Quick Release; attachment points should all be closed and tight.

Only ride your bike if it is safe. If you need assistance with your repairs, contact your local bike shop.

## Q13. How many people may be carried on a bicycle?

A. No more than the bicycle was designed and equipped for.

1. A person propelling a bicycle or an electric bicycle shall not ride other than upon or astride a permanent and regular seat thereto.

2. No bicycle or electric bicycle shall be used to carry more persons at one time than the number for which it is designed and equipped.

(NRS 484B.770)

## Q14. What is a designated “Bicycle Lane”?

- A. A portion of the roadway, engineered to accommodate bicycle travel, generally 5 or more feet wide, marked by longitudinal lines and a stencil of a “rider on a bicycle” located in the center of the lane at intermittent intervals. Intermittent signage may also be used but is not required.

A common misconception is that anywhere a white longitudinal line is painted near the shoulder it is a bicycle lane. This is not the case. Solid white lines (edge markings or fog lines) are commonly provided on the right side of a roadway to help vehicle drivers maintain their lane. The white longitudinal line, on its own, does not designate a bicycle lane in Nevada. It must also have a “rider on a bicycle” stencil and meet minimum federal width criteria to be a bicycle lane. The number and placement of stencils may vary based on the specific roadway environment.



## Q15. Can a pedestrian walk in the bicycle lane?

- A. No. A pedestrian may not walk in a bicycle lane, or any portion of a highway, if there are sidewalks available for their use.

Where sidewalks are provided, it is unlawful for any pedestrian to walk along and upon an adjacent highway.

(NRS 484B.297)

An exception to this would be when no sidewalks are provided and no additional shoulder areas exist. In this situation bicycle lanes may be the only area available for pedestrians. Note: when no sidewalks are provided, pedestrians must walk on the left side of the roadway facing traffic.

Pedestrians walking along highways where sidewalks are not provided shall walk on the left side of those highways facing the approaching traffic.

(NRS 484B.297)

## Q16. What is a “Shared Lane” or “Sharrow”?

- A. The Shared Lane marking, or “Sharrow”, is a pavement marking installed in a right-hand travel lane that indicates, to both bicyclists and motor vehicle drivers, that the lane is to be shared by both vehicles and bicycles. It appears as a bicycle symbol with 2 chevron markings above. When you see this symbol, you are allowed to ride in the full lane. Shared Lane markings may also be used to convey direction and or routing for bicyclists.



## Q17. Do bicyclists always have to signal when executing a turn?

- A. Yes. Bicyclists must use hand signals unless it would be unsafe to do so. You must operate the way a motor vehicle would.

...An operator of a bicycle or an electric bicycle upon a roadway shall not turn from a direct course unless the movement may be made with reasonable safety and the operator gives an appropriate signal. The operator shall give the appropriate signal at least one time but is not required to give the signal continuously.  
(NRS 484B.768)



## Q18. Are vehicles allowed to pass bicycles in all circumstances and conditions?

- A. No. The overtaking (passing) of a bicycle must follow NRS 484B.270. If the passing options outlined in this statute cannot be achieved under the highway conditions, then the vehicle must wait until a safe opportunity presents itself and they are able to pass under the requirements of the statute.

When overtaking or passing a bicycle or electric bicycle proceeding in the same direction, the driver of a motor vehicle shall exercise due care and:

(a) If there is more than one lane for traffic proceeding in the same direction, move the vehicle to the lane to the immediate left, if the lane is available and moving into the lane is reasonably safe; or

(b) If there is only one lane for traffic proceeding in the same direction, pass to the left of the bicycle or electric bicycle at a safe distance, which must be not less than 3 feet between any portion of the vehicle and the bicycle or electric bicycle, and shall not move again to the right side of the highway until the vehicle is safely clear of the overtaken bicycle or electric bicycle.

(NRS 484B.270)



## Q19. Does the bicycle passing law also apply when a bicycle lane is provided?

- A. Yes. There is no provision in NRS 484B.270 which addresses differing bicycle facility types. The law applies any time a bicycle is being overtaken.

## **Q20. Are there exceptions from the requirement for a bicyclist to signal?**

- A. Yes. Bicyclists are allowed exceptions related to safe operation and control of the bicycle.

An operator of a bicycle or an electric bicycle is not required to give a signal if:

- (a) The bicycle or electric bicycle is in a designated turn lane; or
- (b) Safe operation of the bicycle or electric bicycle requires the operator to keep both hands on the bicycle or electric bicycle.

(NRS 484B.768)

## **Q21. What hand signals must a bicyclist use?**

- A. Bicyclists must use the same hand signals as are required for motor vehicles. Bicyclists may also use the right arm extended horizontally for a right turn.

All signals given by hand and arm shall be given by hand and arm extended beyond the left side of the vehicle in the following manner, and shall indicate the turns that follow:

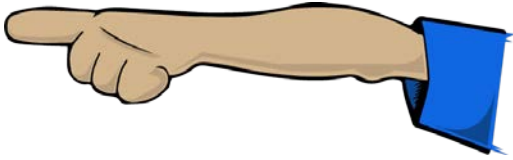
- 1. Left turn: Hand and arm extended horizontally.
- 2. Right turn: Hand and arm extended upward.
- 3. Stop or decrease speed: Hand and arm extended downward.
- 4. Reentering lane of traffic from parked position: Hand and arm extended horizontally.

(NRS 484B.420)

An operator of a bicycle or an electric bicycle upon a roadway shall give all signals by hand and arm in the manner required by NRS 484B.420, except that the operator may give a signal for a right turn by extending his or her right hand and arm horizontally and to the right side of the bicycle or electric bicycle.

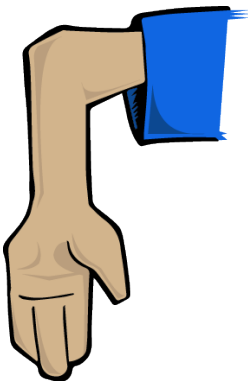
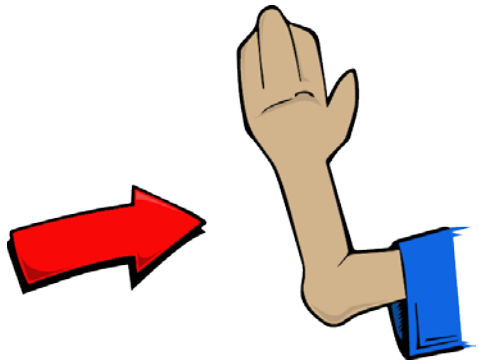
(NRS 484B.769)

# Signaling



A left turn is signaled by holding the left arm straight out from your body.

A right turn is signaled by bending the left arm straight up. It can also be signaled by using your right arm and pointing right.



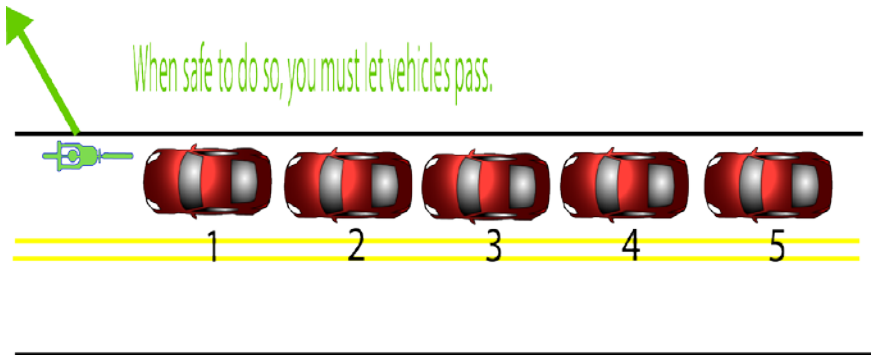
A stop is signaled by bending the left arm down with the hand flat and backwards. This can also be used to signal that the rider is slowing down. Students should call out "Stopping" or "Slowing" when riding with other cyclists.

**Q22. In the event that there is no safe opportunity to pass a bicyclist (as outlined in NRS 484B.270), does the bicyclist have a responsibility to move off the roadway?**

A. Yes. Under the responsibilities of a bicyclist to follow the same duties of a vehicle upon a roadway, once 5 or more vehicles are lined up behind, a bicyclist must move off the roadway when it is safe to do so.

On a highway that has one lane for traveling in each direction, where passing is unsafe because of traffic traveling in the opposite direction or other conditions, the driver of a slow-moving vehicle, behind which five or more vehicles are formed in a line, shall, to allow the vehicles following behind to proceed, turn off the roadway:

- (a) At the nearest place designated as a turnout by signs erected by the public authority having jurisdiction over the highway; or
  - (b) In the absence of such a designated turnout, at the nearest place where:
    - (1) Sufficient area for a safe turnout exists; and
    - (2) The circumstances and conditions are such that the driver is able to turn off the roadway in a safe manner.
- (NRS 484B.630)



### **Q23. May a vehicle cross a double yellow line (no passing zone) in order to pass a bicyclist?**

- A. No. There is no provision in the law to allow crossing of a double yellow line (no passing zone) to overtake a bicyclist.

...a driver shall not drive on the left side of the highway within such zone or drive across or on the left side of any pavement striping designed to mark such zone throughout its length.

(NRS 484B.217)

### **Q24. Can a bicyclist continue through a red light when the signal has not detected them?**

- A. Yes. If a bicycle is not detected by a traffic signal the bicycle may move left, right or through the signal after they have waited two traffic light cycles. Under such a condition, a bicyclist moving on a red light must yield to pedestrians and other traffic.

After complying with the requirement to stop, a person driving a motorcycle, moped or tri-mobile or riding a bicycle or an electric bicycle may proceed straight through or turn right or left if:

- (1) The person waits for two complete cycles of the lights or lighted arrows of the applicable official traffic control device and the signal does not change because of a malfunction or because the signal failed to detect the presence of the motorcycle, moped, tri-mobile, bicycle or electric bicycle;
- (2) No other devices at the place prohibits either or both such turns, if applicable; and
- (3) The person yields the right-of-way to pedestrians and other traffic as directed by the signal at the intersection.

(NRS 484B.307)

## Q25. May bicycles ride upon freeways and Interstate highways in Nevada?

A. It depends. In most urban areas bicycles are prohibited on freeways and interstates due to large traffic volumes and complex traffic movements. Most urban areas offer safer alternatives for bicyclists on local roads.

Due to Nevada's rural nature outside of its cities, in many cases the freeways /interstates may provide the only access for bicycles. In these situations, bicycling on freeways/interstates is allowed.

Any prohibitions on freeways/interstates will be signed (shown below). Please watch for these prohibited areas if bicycling on freeways and interstate highways.



# Restricted Areas:

## Interstate 580/US 395- Reno/Carson City Area

- Between Exit 78 (Red Rock Rd) and Exit 44 (Eastlake Blvd).
- Between Exit 43 (North Carson St) and Exit 38 (Fairview Dr)

## Interstate 80

- In Reno/Sparks Area between Exit 2 (West Verdi) and Exit 21 (Vista Blvd).
- In Wadsworth/Fernley Area between Exit 43 (Wadsworth/Pyramid Lake) and Exit 48 (US ALT 95)
- At Carlin Tunnels between Exit 282 (East Carlin) and East Tunnel Portals

## Interstate 15- Las Vegas Area

- Between Exit 12 (Jean) and Exit 50 (Lamb Blvd).

## Interstate 95- Las Vegas Area

Between Exit 56A (Wagonwheel Dr & Nevada St Dr) and Exit 95(Kyle Canyon Rd)

## Interstate 215/515- Las Vegas Area

Entire Route prohibited

# Tips While Riding Your Bicycle

Safety can be increased by motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians by communicating your intentions.

1. **Hold Your Line** - Ride in a straight line, be consistent and be predictable. Avoid erratic movements and make sure to signal before you make a lane change or turn.
2. **Wear Your Helmet** - Make sure to wear your helmet. Make sure it is fitted properly. Wearing a helmet can save your life.
3. **Use Road Sense** - Interact positively with traffic and communicate with drivers. Let drivers know of your intentions.
4. **Visibility** - Be safe and be seen! Wear bright and reflective clothing. Can drivers see you? Avoid vehicle blind spots.
5. **Be Prepared** - Always have you ID, money, phone, repair kit, bike tools and water with you when you ride.
6. **Courteous Riding** - Treat others like you would like to be treated. Each roadway user is responsible for their own actions and must obey all traffic laws. Be a courteous rider and Share the Road.
7. **Keep Your Head Up** - Looking ahead will give you enough time to maneuver around any obstacles that you may encounter. Be aware of the riding environment.
8. **Can You Hear Me Now?** - Don't ride with earphones or any device that would prevent you from hearing. Listen to your environment to help avoid potentially dangerous situations.
9. **Be Attentive** - Do not text or use devices while riding. Focus on the road.
10. **Yield** - Always yield to pedestrians and equestrians.



# For More Information:



[www.bicyclenevada.com](http://www.bicyclenevada.com)  
Phone - (775) 888-RIDE (7433)

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Regional Transportation Commission -  
Washoe County  
Phone - (775) 348-0400



Regional Transportation Commission of  
Southern Nevada  
Phone - (702) 228-RIDE (7433)



North West Command- (775) 688-2500

Southern Command- (702) 486-4100

North East Command- (775) 753-1111



The Nevada Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board (NBPAB) was created by the State Legislature to:

- Promote programs and facilities for the safe use of bicycles and pedestrian safety in this State.
- Advise appropriate agencies of the State on policies, programs and facilities of the safe use of bicycles and pedestrian safety

It consists of 14 members appointed by the Governor. Seven members represent pre-determined segments of Nevada's bicycle and pedestrian stakeholders. The remaining seven members represent State agencies whose overview relates to bicycling and walking. For more information on obtaining a seat on the Nevada Bicycle and Pedestrian Board go to [gov.nv.gov/application-information](http://gov.nv.gov/application-information)

The NBPAB is not part of the Department of Transportation as it is advisory to all State agencies. The Department of Transportation provides secretarial and coordination functions for the Board.





Published By:

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Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program

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