



Community of New Paltz

Rules of the Road for Bicyclists



A Safety and Recreation Project of the New Paltz Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

As a community, New Paltz is striving to become more bike-friendly, and we encourage residents and visitors to ride bicycles. The New Paltz Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee has created a concise Rules of the Road to promote safe and enjoyable use of our thoroughfares.

When biking in our community, please keep in mind the following:

1. **Bicycles have a right to be on the road.** A bicycle is a legal vehicle, with the all the rights and responsibilities of other vehicles on the road.
2. **Pedestrians have the right of way. Bicycles must yield to pedestrians.**
3. **Our community urges all bike riders to wear a helmet. All children 14 and under MUST wear a helmet by law. By law, you may not transport a child under one year of age on a bicycle.**
4. **Fit your helmet well!** A helmet should fit squarely on top of the head in a level position and cover the top of the forehead, extending down to about an inch above the eyebrows. The helmet should not be able to slide back and forth on the head or rock from side to side. In the event of a crash, helmets should be replaced immediately, even if there is no apparent damage.
5. **Ride WITH, not AGAINST traffic!** The law requires that bicyclists ride with traffic. Bicycling against traffic is a leading cause of bicycle crashes. Riding with traffic makes bicyclists more visible and their movements more predictable to motorists.
6. **Ride on the right side of the road.** Ride on the far right side of the road or on a safe shoulder. Bicyclists may move to the left to avoid hazards such as parked cars or debris, taking care to not to interfere with other traffic.
7. **Stop at traffic signals and stop signs.** Your orderly and courteous behavior makes everyone safer.
8. **Do not ride on New Paltz sidewalks.** Village code prohibits riding on the sidewalk; town code does not address this issue. Our community recommends that you bike in the street or roadway, not on the sidewalk. Riding on the sidewalk endangers people on foot. Except for very young cyclists under parental supervision, sidewalks are not for bicycling. **Where there is a sidewalk and you don't feel it's safe to ride in the road, consider dismounting and walking on the sidewalk until you can re-enter the roadway.**
9. **DO NOT wear headphones while biking!** Steer with your ears as well as your eyes.
10. **Signal when turning.** Both people and motor vehicles need to know your intentions.
11. **If you're driving, give bicycles a wide berth.** While driving, please give cyclists plenty of clearance when passing them.
12. **Two abreast on the roadway?** Bicyclists may ride two abreast on roadways, but they must ride single file when being overtaken by other vehicles. They must ride single file when passing motor vehicles, pedestrians or other bicyclists.
13. **Exercise care and courtesy on the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail.** The rail trail is one of the jewels of New Paltz and a place where bicyclists, hikers and horses coexist. Make sure to yield to all other trail users and to ride at a moderate speed. Please alert other users when you are approaching from behind, reduce your speed, and pass only on the left. Be especially careful not to spook or startle horses. **When overtaking a person on horseback, SLOW DOWN and calmly announce your presence by saying "Hello! Bike approaching!" Dismount when a horseback rider passes you. A moving bicycle can spook the horse.** Find more information at http://www.wvrta.org/Enjoying_the_Trail.php.
14. **What equipment is required on bicycles?** By law, a bicycle must be equipped with:
 - A brake that is capable of making the bike tires skid on dry, level pavement.
 - A bell, horn or other device that can be heard at least 100 feet away. Sirens and whistles are not permitted.
 - A headlight and taillight, if ridden at night.
 - Reflectors on the wheels.
- **What other laws should bicyclists know?**
 - Sit on the bike seat, not the fender or handlebars. Keep feet on the pedals and never carry more people on the bike than the number for which it was designed.
 - Keep at least one hand on the handlebar at all times.
 - Never attach yourself or your bike to another vehicle on the roadway.
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16. **What should a cyclist do in case s/he is involved in a crash?**
 - Notify the Department of Motor Vehicles within 10 days of a bicycle crash involving death or serious injury. If no motor vehicle was involved, file a bicycle crash report. If a motor vehicle was involved, file a motor vehicle accident report. Forms are available at DMV offices. Parents may file on behalf of minor children.
 - If while biking you're involved in an incident that causes serious physical injury, before you leave the scene you must:
 - Stop and provide a name and residence, including street and street number to the injured party, if practical, and to a police officer.
 - If no police officer is near the crash site, then you should report the incident as soon as you are physically able at the nearest police station or judicial officer. Leaving the scene of an incident without reporting is a Class B misdemeanor.

The above rules are adapted and excerpted from the New York State Department of Transportation "Bike NY" page at <https://www.dot.ny.gov/display/programs/bicycle/faq>. Go to this link for a more complete explanation and for other information relevant to bicycling in New York State. The New Paltz Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is a joint project of the Town and Village of New Paltz. Write to bikeped1@townofnewpaltz.org if you would like a PDF of this document or with any other questions.