

How to share the road

Rules for Motorists

See bicycles...as traffic.

Don't blast your horn. It's rude, startling, and dangerous. Wait to pass until it's safe to do so, and leave plenty of distance.

Watch for children. Children on bicycles are often unpredictable. Expect the unexpected.

Give bikes three (3) feet. It's the law. Slow down and wait until it is safe to pass. Give bikes at least three (3) feet of clearance when passing—it's the law! More distance is recommended at higher speeds or in windy conditions. If practical, change lanes, same as when passing a motor vehicle. [Section 32-5A-82](#)

Be careful at intersections. Assume bicyclists are traveling straight through intersections unless they signal otherwise. Right of way rules apply equally to bicycles and motor vehicles. Yield to bicyclists as you would to any other slow-moving vehicle. [Section 32-5A-110-112](#)

Be cautious exiting a parked car. When parked adjacent to a travel lane, look back for approaching bicyclists before opening your car door. Develop the habit of opening the driver's door with your right hand, making it easy to notice any traffic that is approaching from behind.

Be safe at intersections. Obey traffic signs and signals at all intersections. Slow and stop at yellow lights. At stop signs, consider moving as a single unit through intersections if all riders feel it is safe to do so. Consider adopting a policy of regrouping after the intersection, off the roadway, when the group is split.

Proper lane positioning. Alabama law requires bicycles to ride as far right in the lane as practicable. A rider is permitted to use the entire travel lane when hazards exist, such as potholes or debris.

[Section 32-5A-263\(a\)](#)

Bikes never cross yellow center lines. Be courteous and ride on or near the shoulder when it is safe to do so, or when slowing to stop.

Don't pass on the right. Although Alabama law permits bicyclists to pass cars on the right under some circumstances, this is discouraged and dangerous—especially at urban intersections. On group rides gather behind the last car in line as a courtesy to motorists.

[Section 32-5A-83](#)

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Rules for Bicyclists

People riding bicycles have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers of motor vehicles. Sharing busy roads with motorists is easier when you ride legally and predictably. [Section 32-5A-260](#)

Ride with traffic. Always ride with traffic. Riding against traffic is a leading cause of crashes. When approaching intersections, choose the rightmost lane in your direction. [Section 32-5A-263\(a\)](#)

Ride predictably, be alert.

Ride in a straight and predictable manner. Look ahead, be aware of the traffic around you, and anticipate hazards. Yield to pedestrians and obey all traffic signals and signs, that's the law.

Indicate all turns using arm signals.

Make left turns safely: Turn left from the left side of the travel lane or a left turn lane; or stop on the right, dismount, and walk across at a crosswalk.



left turn

(view from behind)



right turn



or right turn



stopping

Be visible. In most bike-car collisions, drivers insist they did not see the bicyclist, so it pays to be visible. AlaBike recommends red flashing taillights and bright reflective clothing. When riding at night, Alabama law requires a front bike headlight and a rear red reflector. [Section 32-5A-265\(a\)](#)

Wear a helmet. Helmets are required for bicyclists under age 16 and recommended for all. Wearing a helmet is the best protection against head injury in a crash. [Section 32-5A-283\(1\)](#)

Maintain your equipment. Give your bike a regular inspection and a yearly professional tune-up. Worn or under-inflated tires, bad brakes, or a faulty drivetrain can be dangerous. [Section 32-5A-265\(b\)](#)

Group Ride Guidelines

Stay safe, legal, and courteous.

Be predictable. Look before you make a move. Riders and motorists expect you to ride in a straight line and at a consistent speed. Avoid sudden changes in speed or lane position. Scan behind and to the side before changing position, slowing, or pulling off the road to stop.

Communicate. Clearly communicate to other riders changes in speed or direction, road hazards, pedestrians, and vehicles. Call out “slowing”, “car back”, “debris”, “hole”, or “stopping”. Point down at hazards. Repeat calls throughout the group. Coordinate group turns and consider turning as a single unit.

Signal all turns. Look behind before lane changes or turns. Signal safely in advance, using one of the arm signals shown, including the alternate right turn signal. [Section 32-5A-263\(d\)](#)

Ride only two abreast. Group riding often requires riding two abreast. While this is legal in Alabama, please exercise your rights courteously. [Section 32-5A-263\(b\)](#)