

**State Law Regarding
THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CYCLISTS**



*This document is only meant to be a guide and not intended to be used as a legal document. Please refer to the appropriate statute for details of any laws pertaining to the use of bicycles and motor vehicles.

Subject	State Law	Enforcement
Abreast riding	Riders may not ride more than two abreast;and riders “shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic” and “shall ride within a single marked lane.” 23 V.S.A. §1139(b)	State: \$105 waiver penalty
Brakes	No person may operate a bicycle unless it is equipped with a brake which will enable the operator to make the braked wheels skid on dry, level, clean pavement. 23 V.S.A. §1141(c)	State: \$76 waiver penalty
Hand signals	No turn shall be made without first giving a signal. <u>Left turn</u> : left arm extended arm extended horizontally <u>Right turn</u> : left arm extended upward or right arm extended horizontally <u>Stop or decrease speed</u> : left arm extended downward. 23 V.S.A. §1065 A bicyclist shall comply with this subsection unless he or she cannot do so safely. 23 V.S.A. §1065	State: 2 Points, \$93 waiver penalty
Night operation	When operating at night, a bicycle must have a <u>lamp in the front</u> which emits light visible from 500 feet; <u>red light in the rear</u> visible from 300 feet <u>or reflector(s) totalling at least 20 square inches</u> visible from 300 feet to the rear. 23 V.S.A. §1141	State: \$76 waiver penalty
Motor vehicles passing bicycles	A motor vehicle passing a bicycle “shall exercise due care, which includes increasing clearance to a recommended distance of at least four feet , to pass the vulnerable user safely, and shall cross the center of the highway” only when safe to do so. 23 V.S.A. §1033(b)	State: 4 Points, \$392 waiver penalty
Motor vehicles crowding and harassing	The operator of a vehicle shall not, in a careless or imprudent manner, approach, pass, or maintain speed unnecessarily close to a bicyclist, and an occupant of a vehicle shall not throw any object or substance at a vulnerable user. 23 V.S.A. § 1039	State: 4 Points (all), \$277 waiver penalty (crowding) \$392 waiver penalty (throwing objects)
Registration	No requirement for registration.	N/A
Rights and responsibilities, general	Every person riding a bicycle is granted all of the rights and is subject to all of the duties applicable to operators of vehicles, except as to those provisions which by their very nature can have no application. 23 V.S.A. §1136(c)	Same penalties for bicycles as for motor vehicles under state and local rules.
Where Bicycles May Ride		
Bicycles prohibited on limited access highways	It is illegal for bicycles to ride on limited access highways like I89 or I91 23 V.S.A. §1004	State: 2 points \$162 waiver penalty
Where to ride in the roadway	Bikes should generally ride as near to the right as practicable. Exceptions: to make a left turn; if the right lane becomes a right-turn-only lane; to pass another user; to avoid a hazard. A person operating a bicycle must exercise due care when passing. 23 V.S.A. §1139(a)	State: \$76 waiver penalty
Not required to use bike path	Bicyclists are permitted to use the road, even where there is an adjacent path. 23 VSA §1139(c)	N/A
Riding on sidewalks and crosswalks	There is no state law that prohibits bicyclists from riding on sidewalks. However, municipalities have the authority to regulate their own sidewalks. Bicyclists do not have the right-of- way in crosswalks under state law unless they dismount and walk.	N/A
Paved road shoulders are bicycle lanes	“Paved road shoulders are considered bicycle lanes” which the statute defines as for preferential use by bicycles. 19 VSA §2301(3)	N/A