



Guide to Missouri Road Rules, Markings, and Signs for Everyone who Drives, Walks, or Bicycles

How can you share the road safely with people who walk and bicycle?

Signs and road markings for pedestrian and trail crossings, bicycle lanes and routes—what do they all mean?

What are the rules of the road for people who walk and bicycle?

Sharing the Road

As a driver, you must share the road with many other users: people walking, people biking, moped and motorcycle riders, trucks and buses, recreational vehicles, and other passenger vehicles of all shapes and sizes. As a driver or user of the road, you need to know and practice the rules of the road. You should always be aware of the traffic around you and be prepared for emergency situations.

There are many vulnerable users of a public way, crosswalk, or shoulder of the highway. A pedestrian, highway worker, a person riding an animal, or an individual operating a bicycle are a few of these individuals.

People Walking

Drivers must recognize the special safety needs of people walking. **Drivers should be especially alert for people walking who are young, elderly, disabled, or intoxicated.** They are the most frequent victims in auto-pedestrian collisions.

Generally, people walking have the right of way at all intersections. There is a crosswalk at every intersection, even if it is not marked by painted lines. To determine where an unmarked crosswalk is, imagine that the sidewalk or shoulder at the corner extends across the road and meets the sidewalk or shoulder on the other side of the road. By law, the area included in the unmarked crosswalk is not less than 6 feet wide and exists even if there is no sidewalk or shoulder.





Drivers must not block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light. Do not stop with any portion of your vehicle overhanging the crosswalk area. Blocking a crosswalk puts them in a dangerous situation and forces people walking to go around your vehicle.

A pedestrian is crossing the roadway when any part or extension of the pedestrian moves onto the roadway in a crosswalk with intent to cross. This may include, but is not limited to, any part of the pedestrian's body, wheelchair, cane, crutch, or bicycle.

At an intersection where people walking are crossing, you must wait until the people walking have cleared your lane and the entire next lane before you may go. If you are turning at a signal, you must stop and wait until people walking clear the lane you are turning in to, plus 6 feet of the next lane.

You are not required to stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk if you are traveling along the half of the roadway that is on the other side of a safety island from the pedestrian.

You must stop and remain stopped for people walking on the sidewalk when entering or leaving an alley, driveway, or private road.

Remember: There is a crosswalk at every intersection regardless of whether or not it is marked by painted lines.

Stopped Vehicles at Crosswalks

Do not pass a vehicle stopped at a crosswalk. This is a frequent cause of death to people walking, especially if the passing vehicle is traveling at a high speed. When stopping for a pedestrian at a crosswalk on a multi-lane road, you should stop about 30 feet before the crosswalk so you do not block the visibility of the driver in another lane.

Bicycles

Bicycle use on streets and highways is growing, both for exercise and transportation in rural, suburban, and urban areas. **The same traffic rules and regulations apply to both people biking and motor vehicle operators.** A major problem for drivers is the ability to see people biking, especially at night. Sometimes they may be in the blind spot of your vehicle. When you approach a bicyclist, keep on the lookout and slow down. To avoid conflict, drivers of motor vehicles need to know the following rules:

- **Do not drive in a bicycle lane.** You may cross a bicycle lane when turning or when entering or leaving an alley, driveway, private road, or parking space. Do not move into a bicycle lane in preparation for a turn.
- **You may use a bicycle lane as part of an official duty,** such as delivering mail. Farm equipment may briefly use a bicycle lane to let other traffic pass.





- **You must yield to people biking in a bicycle lane or on a sidewalk**, before you turn across the lane or sidewalk.
- **You must yield to people biking at intersections**, the same as you do for other types of vehicles.
- **The same rules for passing other vehicles apply to bicycles.** If you cannot pass safely, you must slow down and remain behind the bicycle until it is safe to pass.
- **You must pass a bicyclist at a safe passing distance—generally at least 3 feet or more, depending on your speed—and do not move back into the lane until safely past the bicyclist.** Generally, this means moving mostly or completely into the next lane.
- **Do not honk at a bicyclist**, unless you have good cause to warn the rider you are close by. The loud noise could startle the rider and cause a crash. There may be a good reason for the bicyclist to be riding in the travel lane, such as roadway hazards not visible to motorists.
- **Operators of motorized wheelchairs, scooters, and personal assistive mobility devices are permitted to use bicycle lanes and paths.** These vehicles cannot exceed a speed limit of 15 mph. You must yield to these operators before you turn across the bicycle lane or path.

Drivers need to remember that people biking often must react differently to road hazards than drivers of motor vehicles. They often must steer around these hazards rather than simply passing straight over them. These hazards could include potholes, glass, litter, storm grates, and railroad crossings, as well as opened doors of parked vehicles. Any of these items could cause a bicyclist to move into your path or to slow down. Give people biking plenty of clearance on the street so they will have room to move around these hazards.

The actions of an inexperienced bicyclist will be less predictable. Look for signs that tell you a bicyclist is inexperienced, such as whether the bicycle rider is riding against traffic, or is weaving and wobbling.

Children on bicycles should be given extra consideration. They may lack a sense of danger or understanding of the rules of the road. Be aware that their actions could be very unpredictable.

Collisions with People biking

Several common errors or situations can cause you to strike a bicyclist:

- **Turning left without noticing an oncoming bicyclist.**
- **Turning right at an intersection or driveway across the path of a bicyclist on the right** who is continuing straight ahead
- **Turning right at an intersection or driveway without noticing a wrong-way bicyclist** coming from the opposite direction in front of you.
- **Entering or crossing a street without checking for a bicyclist in the street or on the sidewalk.**
- **Opening a vehicle door into the path of a bicyclist**
- **Swerving into a bicycle lane.**
- **Neglecting to consider your mirror:** Trucks, RVs, and vehicles pulling trailers—any vehicle with wide mirrors—can misjudge the needed passing distance for the vehicle and mirror when passing a person riding a bicycle.



Signs

Share the Road (W11-11, W16-1P)



Objective of Sign – The sign serves to make motorists aware that people biking might be on the road, and that they have a legal right to use the roadway. It is typically placed along roadways with high levels of bicycle usage but relatively hazardous conditions for people biking. The "Share the Road" sign is especially useful in cities and towns where a significant number of people biking utilize a roadway that by its nature is not suitable to be designated as a bicycle route, but which is an important connection for bicycle transportation.

Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars – Care should be taken by motorists on roads with this signing with the expectation that there is a regular usage of the roadway by people biking. Due to hazards in the roadway such as curb and gutter sections with drainage grates in the gutter, no shoulder or shoulder conditions that cannot be reasonably used by people biking and they must travel in a travel lane. The speed limit on roadways that utilize “Share the Road” signs may be from 15 mph to 60 mph. People biking legally may still use roads that do not have these signs.

Bicycles May Use Full Lane (R4-11)



Objective of Sign – designate roads with lanes that are too narrow to be safely shared side-by-side by a bicycles and another vehicle to indicate that people biking may occupy the full lane and discourage unsafe within-lane passing.

Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars - encourage people biking to use the full lane to discourage unsafe within-lane passing, encourage motorists to change lanes to pass people biking, and warn motorists that people biking may be using the entire lane. People biking may use full lane even on roads without this sign when conditions are unsafe.

Trail Crossing (W11-15, W11-15P)



Objective of Sign – Advise motorist of a trail crossing of a roadway, alley, private entrance or commercial entrance.

Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars – The sign is used to warn motorists that there is a crossing of a shared use path or greenway of a travel way and motor vehicles should yield to bicycles, runners or people walking who are in the crossing area.

Bike Lane (R3-17)



Objective of Sign – The Bike Lane sign is an optional sign for roadways that include a separated bike lane immediately adjacent to the travel lane or separated by a buffer space consisting of parking, raised barrier or painted buffer. The sign may also include a “Begin” or “Ends” plaque that advises motorists or people biking that the bike lane is starting or ending on a roadway.

Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars – The bike lane sign is a sign for roadways with bike lanes that provides an indication for motorists that there is a bike lane in a roadway cross section and motorists should yield to bicycle operators or yield when making turning movements right or left from the roadway to a side street, entrance, or parking space. People biking may legally use roads that do not have bike lanes.

The sign is “optional” meaning that it will not be placed in every location where there are bicycle lanes. Sometimes the bicycle lane is indicated by a combination of lines and on-street markings or paint, and no specific sign is installed.

Bike Route Sign (D11-1)



Objective of Sign - Bicycle Route Guide (D11-1) signs are provided at decision points along designated bicycle routes to inform people biking and motorists of bicycle route and/or direction changes for people biking on a roadway.

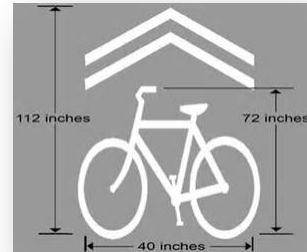
Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars – Roads signed with a bike route sign are those that are on a bikeway network or is an intended route for bicycles in a network. People biking are to utilize the bicycle facility in place on that roadway which may range from a shared roadway to a trail along the roadway. Motorists who see the bike route signing should expect people biking either on the roadway or crossing the roadway at side streets or entrances. People biking may legally use roads that do not have a bike route sign.

For bicyclists, the signs help them find and follow the bicycle route and indicate turns or places where the routes split.

Pavement Markings

Shared Lane Marking

- ✓ **Objective of Marking** - A **shared-lane marking** or **sharrow** is a street marking installed at locations in the center travel lane or sometimes to the right-center of a travel lane if it is extra-wide (generally 13 feet wider or greater). The marking indicates typical lane positioning that a cyclist should use in the travel lane. The marking supplements the “Bicycles May Use Full Lane” signs at posted speed limits of 35 mph or less.



Sharrows are often used to provide continuity for bicycle lanes or routes in sections of the route where, for example, bicycle lanes or other bicycle facilities are not feasible or not necessary.

- ✓ **Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars** – If the shared lane marking is centered in the travel lane, the bicyclist should position themselves in the center of the travel lane when riding since the lane is not wide enough to share. Drivers should pass the bicyclist safely whatever the cyclist’s lane position.

If the person bicycling is positioned in the center of the lane, the person driving generally must move completely into the next lane to pass safely.

If the shared lane marking is positioned in the right side of the a wider travel lane the bicyclist shall position themselves riding over the marking and motor vehicles may pass the bicyclist with caution. In this case, the person driving may be able to pass safely by moving far left in the lane or by moving only partially into the next lane.

People who drive should be aware the bicyclists will **more frequently use a street with sharrow markings** and that they should—as always!--**pass bicyclists on that street safely and at a safe distance**, whatever the lane position of the bicyclist.

Many people who bicycle, especially inexperienced riders, position themselves too far to the right and endanger themselves and others by making themselves less visible at the edge of the road, by encouraging drivers to squeeze past too close at an unsafe distance and by encountering debris, gutters, road seams, and road imperfections at the far right of the lane. **Sharrows help encourage people who bicycle to normal lane position further to the center of the lane**—the position that decades of research and experience has shown, is safer for all road users.

Note that the sharrow is only a suggested lane position for people bicycling. By law, people biking may legally use the full lane regardless of the position of the marking. People biking may legally use roads that are not marked with sharrows.

Regardless of sharrow position, people biking must use their best judgment and not place themselves in danger if the sharrow is improperly placed, such as too close to the right side of the road, near road hazards, or adjacent to parked cars which could put them at risk of being hit by a suddenly opened car door.

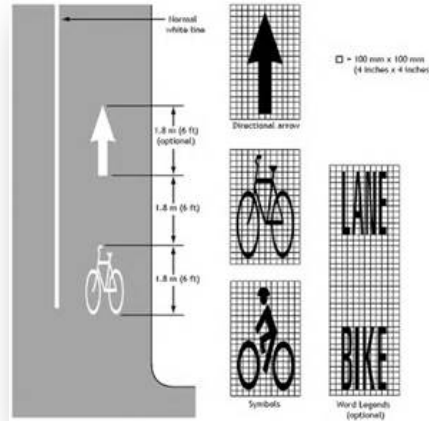
Bike Lane Markings

✓ **Objective** – An arrow combined with a word or symbol indicate the separation of the lanes for road users, and assist the bicyclist by indicating recommended travel paths.

✓ **Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars** – The bicycle markings are placed in lanes intended for use by bicyclist, which may be in a signed bicycle lane, two-way separated bicycle lane, or a bicycle lane bounded by a hatched buffer on one or both sides of the bicycle lane. **In areas marked with bike markings motor vehicle operators shall not drive in the lane marked with these bike markings, but may cross them after first yielding to a bicyclist in this marked area.** People biking may legally use roads without bike lane marking. In

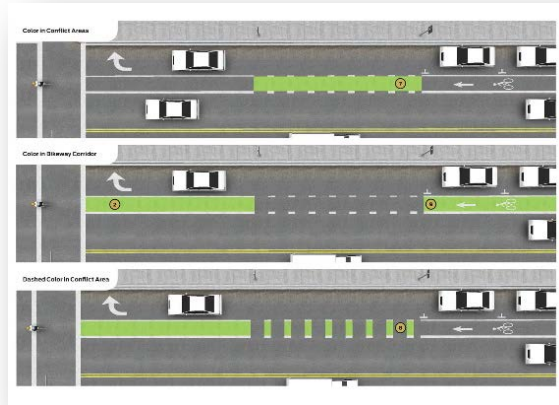
Missouri, people biking are allowed but not required to use a bicycle lane if present. So people bicycling may legally use the full lane when a bike lane is present and will often do so—for example:

- If there is debris in the bike lane or some other reason using the bike lane is impassable or impractical
- If the bicycle lane is improperly designed or dangerous in some way
- When the bicyclist is preparing for or making a left turn
- When the bicyclist is passing another bicyclist or any vehicle or obstacle in the bike lane



Green Pavement Marking

- ✓ **Objective** – The objective a of green pavement marking for a bicycle facility is to **highlight and bring to the attention of both motor vehicle operators and people biking that the area marked is a location where there are weaving movements or crossing of the bike lane.** The marking also may highlight an area for bicyclist positioning for a turn movement in front of a stop bar or in a box for a bicyclist to position themselves for a turn on the far side of an intersection.



- ✓ **Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars** - In areas marked with green pavement marking, **both the bicyclist and motor vehicle user shall proceed with caution along or across the green marked area** or the area highlighted with the green marking. People biking may use other lanes as needed, for example, the right turn only lane for making a right turn.

Through Bike Lane Marking

- ✓ **Objective** – The through bicycle lane marking at an intersection is intended to **position the people biking in the appropriate location for entering the intersection** as well as provide a predictable location for motorists to expect the bicyclist between the travel lane and the right turn lane, shoulder or parking lane.



- ✓ **Expected Interaction between bikes and Cars** – The bicyclist using the through bike lane is to continue travel in the bike lane through the approach, except if the bicyclist is turning left or right. **Motorists should yield to bicyclist in the through bike lane as the motorist enters the intersection area.** Motorists turning right should expect people biking to be traveling straight through the intersection. Should the motorist see the people biking to the left of the through bike lane it can be assumed the bicyclist is turning left, and alternatively if the people biking is to the right of the through bike lane the bicyclist is assumed to be turning right.

Bikeway Types

Shared Lane

- ✓ **Objective** - Bicycles are allowed on all roadways, unless they are specifically prohibited due to construction or some other factor, and whether or not there are markings and/or signage bicycles may ride in the lane positioned to be visible to motorists and in a position that allows for safe travel.



- ✓ **Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars** – In a shared lane a bicyclist may be as far right as safely possible, in the center of a travel lane, or to the left in a travel lane when positioning for a left turn for changing lane or making a left turn. **In whatever position a bicyclist takes, a motor vehicle operator should slow, yield and allow the other vehicle--in this case a bicycle--to maneuver positions based on the first come, first served rule, until which time it is safe to pass the slower vehicle.**

Standard Bike Lane

- ✓ **Objective** – A standard bike lane is intended to **define roadway space for use by people biking** in the configuration of the roadway for through bicycle operations. Bike lanes should be designed to encourage safe bicycling and proper lane positioning. Bike lane design is intended to provide for a safe roadway that positions motor bicyclist in the most viable and safe position with respect to motor vehicles, turning vehicles and parked cars.



- ✓ **Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars** – Bicyclist should utilize bike lanes when designed and maintained in a reasonable manner, but **people biking may leave the bike lanes when making left or right turns, when debris in the bike lane presents operational concerns for the bicyclist, or when design in a manner that creates safety concerns for a bicyclist.** Motor vehicles should reasonably expect a bicyclist to use a bike lane, but when approaching an intersection, should observe the people biking for a signal of a turn movement that will cause the lane shift of a bicyclist at which time the motorist shall yield the right of way to the turning movement, then proceed past the bicyclist with caution. **Motor vehicles should not drive or park in a bike lane** except when making a turning movement to a driveway, side street or alley, or maneuvering into a parking space.

Buffered Bike Lane

- ✓ **Objective** – The objective of a buffered bike lane is to **provide additional room for safe and comfortable operation of a bike lane with respect to moving traffic, or parked cars.** The buffer of the bike lane may be on the left or right side of the bike lane that will provide space for car door opening of a parked car in the case of a parking side buffer, or space for motor vehicle passing people biking in a bike lane on roadways with higher travel speeds.



- ✓ **Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars** – As with a standard bike lane, a bicyclist should utilize bike lanes when designed and maintained in a reasonable manner, but **people biking may leave the buffered bike lanes when making left or right turns, and when debris in the bike lane presents operational concerns for the bicyclist, or when design in a manner that creates safety concerns** for a bicyclist. Motor vehicles should reasonably expect a bicyclist to use a buffered bike lane, but when approaching an intersection, should observe the people biking for a signal of a turn movement that will cause the lane shift of a bicyclist at which time the motorist shall yield the right of way to the turning movement, then proceed past the bicyclist with caution. **Motor vehicles should not drive or park in a buffered bike lane** except when making a turning movement to a driveway, side street or alley, or maneuvering into a parking space.

Protected Bike Lane

- ✓ **Objective** – in an effort to **provide for a defined separation and comfort for both people biking and motor vehicle operators,** a protected bike lane, or cycle track may be included in a roadway sections. These bikeways may be at street grade or at another level from the roadway. The protection, or buffer space may be in the form of a parked car and buffer, planting area, hatched paint stripes and flexible posts, raised medians or a combination of separation methods.



- ✓ **Expected Interaction between Bikes and Cars** – People biking on a roadway with a protected bike lane should use the protected bike lane provided it is designed for safe operation, free of debris and maintained appropriately. In this form of bikeway facility, the design should include design for clear and logical departure of the protected lane for a turning movement from the bikeway. **Motor vehicle operators should not drive or park in a protected lane and should drive with caution approaching intersections** and yield to bicycle traffic that are making turn movements that reach the intersection first.

Shared Use Path Crossing

- ✓ **Objective** – The objective of a shared use path/greenway crossing is to **provide a highly visible and safe crossing for bicyclist, runners or people walking** across a roadway. The crossing will be signed and marked with pavement markings, but may include a variety of signals types that let a motor vehicle operator know that a bicyclist, runner or pedestrian wishes to cross the roadway.



- ✓ **Expected Interaction**– A **bicyclist, runner or pedestrian should stop at all crossings and make sure it is safe to cross** whether the intersection includes signing and striping, and signals if appropriate. These users should proceed with caution when safe to do so. **Motor vehicle operators should observe the advance crossing signage approaching such crossing and approach with caution** looking for the presence of bicyclist, runners, and people walking and obey the signing or signals depending on those present.

Motor vehicle operators are expected to stop whenever a person walking, running, or bicycling is using the crossing area. If no one is in the crossing area, drivers may stop, slow, or stop and then proceed with caution as indicated by signs and markings.



Rules for Riding a Bicycle on the Road

As a person riding a bicycle in Missouri, you must be aware that bicycles are considered vehicles. **People riding a bicycle have the same rights, duties, and responsibilities as vehicle drivers.**

In the absence of special markings or directions—and the specific situations outlined below—people biking must ride in the direction of traffic and as near to the right side of the travel lane as is safe. On a one-way street in a city, a bicyclist may ride as near as practical to either the right or left side of the street or roadway.

Do not ride *too far right*: The right edge of the road often has hazards like ditches, gutters, sand, gravel shoulders, and so on. Leave space between yourself and these hazards as needed for safety. Generally people bicycling should leave at least 3-4 feet between themselves and any road hazards such as pothole, gutter seams, or ditches—and more if safe operation requires it.

There are some **very important exceptions to the general rule to ride to the right as far as safe, such as:**

- When a bicyclist is **overtaking and passing** another bicycle or vehicle
- When a bicyclist is **getting ready to make a left turn**
- When a **bicyclist is riding close to the speed limit or generally the same speed as traffic**
- When **the lane is too narrow to let a bicycle and another vehicle travel side-by-side safely.**

Note that this exception applies to the vast majority of travel lanes in Missouri: *The generally accepted minimum lane width for sharing a lane between a bicycle and another vehicle is 14 feet. That is the minimum that allows a safe shy distance between the bicyclist and the edge of the road and between the automobile and the bicyclist, while still allowing the automobile to fit completely in the lane.*

So the minimum lane width for safe side-by-side traveling is 14 feet, but the vast majority of travel lanes in Missouri are 12 feet wide or narrower.

- When **riding close to the edge of the roadway is unsafe** because of
 - parked vehicles
 - fixed or moving objects
 - animals
 - or road surface hazards

In all those situations, or when riding to the right is unsafe for any other reason, the person operating the bicycle may ride to the left, center, or right portion of the travel lanes as needed.





Riding too close to the right edge of a road that is too narrow to safely share encourages motorists to try to pass when there is not enough room to do so safely. In this situation, a bicyclist is safer riding in the center of the lane, and motorists should change lanes to pass, waiting until the other lane is clear of oncoming traffic.

Generally, many bicyclists tend to ride too far to the right—further right than is safe—especially cyclists who do not ride on the road very often. If you are unsure about where to ride, please check the resources below under **Bicycle Lane Position**.

People biking may ride side by side along Missouri roads, but only if it does not impede other traffic.

Increase your visibility. It will help protect you on the road. Brightly colored clothing during the day and white or reflectorized clothing at night will help you be seen. **At night, you must have a headlight and rear reflector on your bicycle;** a red taillight and additional reflectors are also helpful.

Other rules include: **signal before making a turn or a stop**, always **keep at least one hand on the handlebars**, don't carry more passengers than there are seats available, **yield to people walking**, have adequate **brakes**, and **never perform stunts** while riding on streets or highways.

Bicycle Education Classes

The Cycling Savvy, the League of American Bicyclist, and local bicycle organizations across Missouri have a variety of training for traffic safety and skills and there are League Certified Instructors across the Missouri.

The League has online resources and a calendar of Bike Ed classes and instructors available across the U.S.: <https://www.bikeleague.org/ridesmart>

Cycling Savvy has online resources and class and instructor listings: <https://cyclingsavvy.org/>

Bicycle Lane Position

League of American Bicyclists – Speed Positioning: <https://bikeleague.org/content/traffic-laws>

Bicycling Street Smarts – Where to Ride on the Road:
<http://www.bikexpert.com/streetsmarts/usa/chapter2a.htm>

International Police Mountain Biking Association, [The Complete Guide to Public Safety Cycling, Chapter 8: Vehicular Cycling, “The Speed Positioning Principle”, pp. 77-78.](#)
<http://ipmba.org/resources/merchandise>

