

New Mexico Driver Manual

- Oncoming vehicles—At a speed of 55 mph, you need about 10 seconds to pass. That means you need a 10 second gap in oncoming traffic and sight-distance to pass. You must judge whether you will have enough space to pass safely.
- Hills and curves—You have to be able to see at least one-third of a mile or about 10 seconds ahead. Anytime your view is blocked by a curve or a hill, you should assume that there is an oncoming vehicle just out of sight. Therefore you should treat a curve or a hill as you do an oncoming vehicle. This means you should not start to pass if you are within one-third of a mile of a hill or curve.
- Intersections—It is dangerous to pass where a vehicle is likely to enter or cross the road. Such places include intersections, railroad crossings and shopping center entrances. While you are passing, your view of people, vehicles or trains can be blocked by the vehicle you are passing. Also, drivers turning right into the approaching lane will not expect to find you approaching in their lane. They may not even look your way before turning.
- Lane restrictions—Before you pass, look ahead for road conditions and traffic that may cause other vehicles to move into your lane. Due to lane restrictions, you might lose your space and it may not be safe to pass:
 - people or bicyclists near the road,
 - a narrow bridge or other situation that causes reduced lane width, or
 - a patch of ice, pothole or something on the road.
- Space to return—Do not pass unless you have enough space to return to the driving lane. Do not count on other drivers to make room for you.
- Railroad grade crossing—Do not pass if there is a railroad grade crossing ahead.

Before you return to the driving lane, be sure to leave enough room between yourself and the vehicle you have passed. When you can see both headlights of the vehicle you just passed in your rear-view mirror, it is safe to return to the driving lane.

SHARING THE ROAD

BICYCLES ARE VEHICLES

Bicycle drivers on roads have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers of cars.

1. Motor vehicle drivers sharing the road with bicycles are required to:

- Keep a safe distance when passing a bicyclist, trying for at least five feet, and passing them only when safe and legal to do so.
- Provide the bicyclist with extra time and space to merge and use turn lanes like other vehicles.
- Treat the bicycle as a legal, slow-moving vehicle such as a backhoe.

Special Considerations for Driving Near Bicycles:

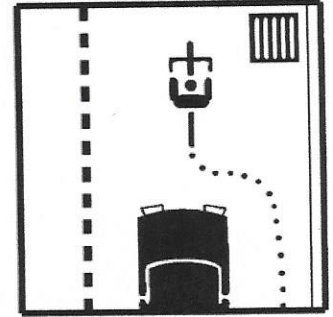
- While bicycles should usually stay on the right side of the roadway, they are legally allowed to take the whole lane by riding in the center of the traffic lane when necessary. Bicyclists will



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typically take the whole lane to prepare for a left turn, to avoid being squeezed on a narrow street, or to avoid hazards, grates and debris, like in this picture, for example.

- Do not make a sudden right turn after passing a bicyclist on your right. Instead, slow down and merge behind the bicyclist before turning.
- Some bicyclists, especially young children, will behave unexpectedly. Stay watchful for sudden movements and lane changes.

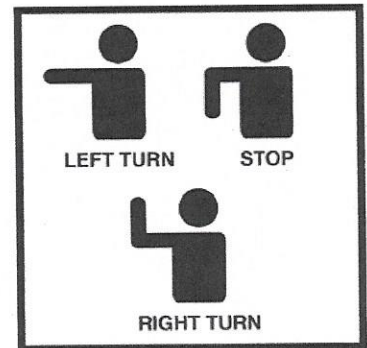


2. Bicycle drivers sharing the road with motorists are required to:

- Obey all traffic signals, laws and signs, just as if driving a car, including night-time use of a bright headlight and good, rear reflector.
- Travel in the same direction as traffic, making left and right turns in the same way cars do.
- Use these hand signals to indicate turning and stopping.

Special Considerations for Bicycling in Traffic:

- Bicycles may be difficult for motorists to see. Wear bright colors, use proper lighting, and be predictable.
- The safest way to ride is as part of the traffic, going with the flow of the normal traffic pattern.
- Adults should, and minors must, wear a well-fitting helmet.



3. What are sharrows?

“Sharrows” are “shared lane pavement markings.” They are painted on the pavement when a road is too narrow for side-by-side road sharing with slower vehicles. They indicate that bicyclists are encouraged to take the whole travel lane and that motorists shall yield to the bicyclist as needed.

As a motorist, what should I do in the presence of sharrows?

- Slow down and yield to bicyclists in the roadway.
- Pass bicyclists only when the roadway width allows bicyclists to move to the right.
- Try to give bicyclists at least five feet of clearance when passing.

As a bicyclist, what should I do in the presence of sharrows?

- As a bicyclist, you may ride on the center of the sharrow.
- Keep a safe distance from the “door zone” of parked cars.
- Move right to let vehicles pass when it is safe to do so.



“Cyclists fare best when they act and are treated as drivers of vehicles.”