



MICHIGAN BICYCLE LAWS

Guide for Law Enforcement Officers

DEFINITIONS

“Bicycle” means a device propelled by human power upon which a person may ride, having either 2 or 3 wheels in a tandem or tricycle arrangement, all of which are over 14 inches in diameter. **MCL 257.4**

“Highway or street” means the entire width between the boundary lines of every way publicly maintained when any part thereof is open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel. **MCL 257.20**

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF BICYCLISTS

Each person riding a bicycle upon a roadway has all of the rights and is subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle except as to the provisions which by their nature do not have application. **MCL 257.657**

CIVIL INFRACTIONS SPECIFIC TO BICYCLISTS

Signals for Stopping or Turning. The operator of a bicycle upon a highway, before stopping or turning from a direct line shall first determine that the stopping or turning can be made in safety and shall give a signal as required. **MCL 257.648**

Keep Right. A person operating a bicycle upon a highway or street at less than the existing speed of traffic shall ride as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway except as follows:

1. When overtaking and passing;
2. When preparing to turn left;
3. When conditions make the right-hand edge of the roadway unsafe or reasonably unusable by bicycles;
4. When traffic is turning right but the individual intends to go straight through the intersection;
5. When riding as near the left-hand curb or edge as practicable on a one-way highway or street.

MCL 257.660a

Multiple Riders. A bicycle shall not be used to carry more persons at one time than the number for which it is designed and equipped. **MCL 257.658(2)**

Riding While Attached to a Vehicle. A person riding upon a bicycle shall not attach the same or himself to a vehicle upon a roadway. **MCL 257.659**

Riding More Than Two Abreast. Individuals operating bicycles upon a highway or street shall not ride more than two abreast except upon a path or portion of the highway or street set aside for the use of bicycles. **MCL 257.660b**

Limited Access Highways. Bicycles shall not be permitted on a limited access highway in this state except for paths designated for the exclusive use of bicycles. **MCL 257.679a**

Operating on Sidewalks. Unless prohibited by an official traffic control device, an individual *may* operate a bicycle upon a sidewalk or a pedestrian crosswalk but shall yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and shall give an audible signal before overtaking and passing a pedestrian and has all of the rights and responsibilities applicable to a pedestrian using that sidewalk or crosswalk. **MCL 257.660c**

Carrying Packages. A person operating a bicycle shall not carry any package, bundle, or article that prevents keeping both hands upon the handlebars. **MCL 257.661**

Lights and Reflectors. A bicycle being operated between 1/2 hour after sunset and 1/2 hour before sunrise shall be equipped with an appropriate white lamp on the front and a red reflector (or a red reflector *with* a red light) on the rear. **MCL 257.662(1)**

Brakes. A bicycle shall be equipped with a brake which will enable the operator to make the braked wheels skid on dry, level, clean pavement. **MCL 257.662(2)**

Parents or Guardians. The parent or guardian of a minor shall not authorize or knowingly permit the child to violate applicable laws. **MCL 257.656(2)**

GENERAL "RULES OF THE ROAD" FOR BICYCLISTS

Based on the particular facts and circumstances, certain provisions of the Michigan Vehicle Code, 1949 PA 300, which set forth the "rules of the road" for vehicles in general, *may* be applicable to bicyclists. Such possible offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

Fail to Yield Right-of-Way MCL 257.649

Fail to Yield-Left at Intersection MCL 257.650

Fail to Stop-Leaving Private Drive MCL 257.652

Disobey Stop, Yield, or Merge Sign MCL 257.671

**Disobey Traffic Signal MCL 257.612
MCL 257.614**

Careless Driving MCL 257.626b

Impeding Traffic* MCL 257.676b

*Note: A bicyclist otherwise operating lawfully at less than the existing speed of traffic that "keeps right" as required by MCL 257.660a is not impeding the normal flow of traffic.

CIVIL INFRACTIONS SPECIFIC TO MOTORISTS

Three-Foot Passing Law. The driver of a motor vehicle overtaking a bicycle proceeding in the same direction shall pass at a safe distance of at least 3 feet to the left of that bicycle or, if it is impracticable to pass the bicycle at a distance of 3 feet to the left, at a safe distance to the left of that bicycle at a safe speed, and when safely clear of the overtaken bicycle shall take up a position as near the right-hand edge of the main traveled portion of the highway as is practicable. Notwithstanding section 640, if it is safe to do so, the driver of a vehicle overtaking a bicycle proceeding in the same direction *may* overtake and pass the bicycle in a no-passing zone. **MCL 257.636(2)(3)**

Bicycle Racks on Vehicles. A registration plate shall at all times be securely fastened in a horizontal position to the vehicle for which the plate is issued so as to prevent the plate from swinging. The plate shall be attached at a height of not less than 12 inches from the ground, measured from the bottom of the plate, in a place and position that is clearly visible. The plate shall be maintained free from foreign materials that obscure or partially obscure the registration information and in a clearly legible condition. The attachment to the rear of a vehicle of a tow ball, bicycle rack, removable hitch, or any other device designed to carry an object on the rear of a vehicle, including the object being carried, does not violate this subsection. **MCL 257.225(2)**

Following a Bicyclist (Basic Speed Law). A person shall not operate a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than that which will permit a stop within the assured, clear distance ahead. **MCL 257.627(1)**

Uniform Traffic Code. A city, township, or village can adopt the uniform traffic code into local ordinance for the regulation of traffic in their cities, townships, or villages. **MCL 257.951**

Law enforcement officers should familiarize themselves with their local codes and ordinances related to bicyclist safety. While the Michigan State Police promulgates the Uniform Traffic Code, the rules are not enforceable unless the local municipality has adopted the code into local code or ordinance.



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