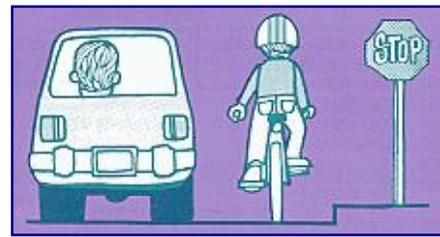


# Rural Road Safety Coalition\*

## CAR & BIKE SAFETY GUIDELINES ON RURAL COUNTY ROADS

March 2012



\* A group comprised of members of local cycling clubs, county advisory committees, county advocacy groups and concerned rural citizens, in accordance with the Sheriff's Department of Orange County, suggest the following guidelines for driving cars and riding bicycles on Orange County roads to assure the safety of all involved. Please pass this on to anyone you know who may benefit from the information.

### Cars

- Follow all traffic and signaling laws for automobiles. Learn to recognize bicycle hand signals (shown at end) in order to increase effective communication between bikes and cars.
- Pass cyclists only if there is clear sight ahead (minimum 500'), and *never on a curve or hill*. Give 2-3 polite toots on your horn to warn bicyclists of your arrival long before you get there to give them time to move over, and do not pass unless they are far to the right and you can pass safely.
- *Never pass cyclists by entering oncoming traffic lane on a curve or hill* on narrow country roads. If there is plenty of room and clear sight ahead to pass (min. 500'), you can move into the opposing lane to avoid unexpected movement of cyclists.
- Stay at least 4-6 feet away from cyclists as you pass. If you are behind a solo bicyclist or group and a car is coming in the other direction on a two lane rural road, slow and wait to pass. *Do not pass while another car is passing in the opposite direction.*
- Give cyclists an extra wide berth passing near driveways and road entrances. Cyclists can't maneuver on gravel without danger of falling and may suddenly swerve into the road to avoid it.
- Respond to the movements and hand signals of bicyclists, including signals to warn you of upcoming hazards. If they see a road hazard, they may "take the road" by signaling you to slow or stop while moving away from the hazard, which may save you from problems as well (broken glass, potholes, animals, etc.). If they can see safe passage for you that you can't see, they may "wave you on" to pass them.

**In general:** Car drivers should be aware of the extreme vulnerability of bicyclists. Even a small tumble at low speeds can cause great harm. Also, bicyclists have to be keenly aware of road conditions and dangers and are always on the lookout. They may need to move suddenly, and it is difficult to make quick changes in speed or direction, so *always* allow them ample space. In addition, give even greater room to children on bicycles, as their control over their movement is less refined. Be extra watchful for cyclists and wildlife at night. "The road goes both ways." Courteous drivers create courteous responses.



## Cyclists

- Follow the same rules of the road as cars, responding to STOPS, right-of-ways, yields, and turning lanes rules. *It's the law!* Use correct hand signals to indicate turning, passing and safe movement. (See below)
- In limited sight areas (crests of hills and curves), merge into single line at far right side of road or shoulder and watch for cars behind and ahead. Do not make cars slow down while you take up the lane.
- We encourage all riders to wear bicycle helmets for safety and to use handlebar or helmet mirrors to keep an eye out for cars in both directions. It is strongly suggested that headphones and cell phones not be used while riding.
- We suggest breaking very large cycling groups into smaller packs of no more than 10-15 riders, riding at least ¼ mile apart to give cars safe room to pass.
- In groups, please keep at least one person with some awareness of traffic at the back of group as a designated lookout. You can switch off. Parents bicycling with children should ride at the back and be in verbal contact with your children if there are cars or other dangers.
- In limited sight areas with traffic coming, members of groups should alert the rest by calling out "Car Back "(behind) or "Car Up" (oncoming) and pass on to whole group. **Move over immediately to the right side of road or shoulder in a single line as quickly and efficiently as possible.** Riders to the right should open file to let inside riders fall in.
- If you see road hazards that would require you moving into the traffic lane and cars are coming up behind, slow and signal if they'll have time to react, or pull over and allow cars to pass. You can also wave cars on in areas where you can see it is clear for them to pass when they can't.
- For your safety, wear brightly colored and/or reflective clothing, especially on grey days or at night, and use headlights and blinking rear and leg lights after dark. Parents towing child carriers should use brightly colored flags on the carriers and reflectors.

**In General:** Many, if not most, car drivers do not understand what it is like to cycle on rural roads. Don't assume cars will understand your intentions or movements, and take extra caution any time a car is near. *ways.*" Courteous courteous responses, other cyclists.

*"The road goes both bicyclists create and reflect well on*

**SAFE BICYCLING**



**HAND SIGNALS:**