Rules of The Road

Obey Traffic Signs and Signals: Bicyclists must obey traffic laws and be courteous to other road users. Every time a bicyclist runs through a red light, rides in a park, impairs traffic, or rides the wrong way, they encourage the notion that bicyclists do not belong on the road. Always ride in the same direction as traffic, never against it. Follow the rules of the road.

Stop

Use Hand Signals
Hand signals tell motorists what you intend to do on the road. Signs are required at least 100 feet before a turn or stop, unless you have both hands to control the bicycle. If there is enough room, let drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists know where you’re going. Signal a turn as a matter of law, courtesy and self-protection.

Left

Ride Consistently
Ride as close as practical to the right. Exceptions to this rule include when crossing at the normal speed of traffic when avoiding hazardous conditions, when preparing to make a left turn, or when using a one-way street.

Right

Use Lights at Night
Use a strong headlight and rear light and/or a red reflector at night and when visibility is poor. Wear light-colored clothes with reflective tape for extra protection. If you ride in an area with few streetlights, a solid beam front light or flashing LED light will help illuminate the way.

STOP

Ride Single File
Be safe and ride single file. Bicyclists can ride side-by-side when they don’t impede the normal movement of traffic.

On-Street Markings

Using Bike Lanes
Bike lanes give bicyclists and motorists their own designated and separate spaces on the road. A bike lane is a portion of the roadway that has been designated by striping and pavement markings for use by bicyclists. Bike lane markings include a solid line and a stencil of a person on a bike with an arrow above to indicate the proper direction for travel. Bicyclists should always ride in the direction indicated by the arrow painted on the street.

Safety Tips for Bicyclists

Avoid Road Hazards
Watch out for sewer grates, oily pavement, slippery manhole covers, gravel, and ice. Cross railroad tracks at right angles because those tracks can be slippery when wet. Slowing down in tricky areas decreases your stopping braking distance, which gives you more time to react to the unexpected.

Choose the Best Way to Turn Left
There are two ways to make a left turn:
1) Like a motorist: Look back over your shoulder, signal, move into left lane and turn.
2) Like a pedestrian: Ride straight to the far-side crosswalk, then walk your bike across the intersection.

Carry Identification
It is a good idea to carry identification in case of an accident or if stopped for a traffic infraction.

Dress Appropriately
Wear a hard-shell helmet whenever you ride. Wear light-colored or reflective clothes at night to make yourself as visible as possible. Also, layering can be key to staying comfortable when riding in wet or cold weather. Leg bands are a cheap and easy way to keep your pant leg free of chain grease.

Don’t Pass On the Right
Drivers may not look for or see a bicyclist passing on the right. You could be seriously injured if a motorist does not see you. When stepping on traffic, it is safer and more courteous to hold your place in the line of traffic.

Go Slow On Sidewalks and Multi-Use Paths
Pedestrians have the right of way on sidewalks. You must give an audible signal when you pass, using either a bell or your voice. Cross driveways and intersections at a walker’s pace and look carefully for traffic. Bicyclists are not allowed to ride on sidewalks in downtown Columbia.

Get the Green Light
Bicyclists must be in the right spot to signal a traffic light. If you come to a red light or stop sign, you can activate the traffic signal. If a car is already present at the signal, it will activate the signal for you.

Sharrows
A ‘sharrow’ is a pavement marking that includes a bike symbol, with two chevrons above it. These markings are painted on streets that are good for bike traffic, but are too narrow for separate bike lanes. Sharrows mark intersections to motorists and bicyclists that they must use the same space on the street as they travel. Sharrows are also used in locations where a bike lane ends and bicyclists must merge with other traffic.

MU Student Resources
1. Environmental Leadership Office
2500 MU Student Center 882-8207
2. Sustainability Office
Virginia Avenue Garage – SW 884-9319
3. MU Police Department Bike Registration
4. Bike Resource Center (free repairs)
environmentalleadership.missouri.edu

MU Campus

For more information on bicycling in Columbia, contact:
getaboutcolumbia.com
(573) 874-7460

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