

Bicycle

Laws, Safety, & Theft Prevention



VERNON COLLEGE POLICE DEPARTMENT



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It's The Law

1. "Bicycle" means a device that a bicyclist may ride and that is propelled by human power and has two tandem wheels at least one of which is more than 14 inches in diameter.
2. "Vehicle" means a device that can be used to transport or draw persons or property on a highway (excluding devices that are used on stationary rails or tracks).
3. A bicycle is a vehicle and a bicyclist operating a bicycle has the rights and duties applicable to a driver operating a vehicle. All laws and signs that regulate the movement of vehicles upon the roadway also apply to bicycles. Therefore, a bicyclist should obey all traffic laws, signs, and signals. This includes stopping at all stop signs and all stop (red) lights.
4. A bicyclist operating a bicycle on a roadway who is moving slower than the other traffic on the roadway shall ride as near as practicable to the right curb or edge of the roadway.

However, there are exceptions to this law. Under the following conditions the law allows bicyclists to take the full lane of travel when:

- a. The bicyclist is passing another vehicle moving in the same direction.
- b. The bicyclist is preparing to turn left at an intersection or onto a private road or driveway.
- c. When there are unsafe conditions on the roadway, including fixed or moving

objects, parked or moving vehicles, pedestrians, animals, or surface hazards that prevent the bicyclist from safely riding next to the curb or edge of the roadway.

- d. The lane is of substandard width (less than 14 feet in width and not having a designated bicycle lane adjacent to that lane) making it unsafe for a bicycle and a motor vehicle to safely travel side by side.
5. A bicyclist operating a bicycle on a one-way roadway with two or more marked traffic lanes may ride as near as practicable to the left curb or edge of the roadway.
 6. Bicyclists operating bicycles on a roadway may ride two abreast. Bicyclists riding two abreast on a lined roadway shall ride in a single lane. Persons riding two abreast may not impede the normal and reasonable flow of traffic on the roadway. Bicyclists may not ride more than two abreast unless they are riding on a part of a roadway set aside for the exclusive operation of bicycles.
 7. A bicyclist operating a bicycle shall ride only on or astride a permanent and regular seat attached to the bicycle.
 8. A bicyclist may not use a bicycle to carry more persons than the bicycle is designed or equipped to carry.
 9. A bicyclist operating a bicycle, coaster, sled, or toy vehicle or using roller skates may not attach the bicyclist or the bicycle, coaster, sled, toy vehicle, or roller skates to a streetcar or vehicle on a roadway.

Safety First!

10. A bicyclist operating a bicycle may not carry any object that prevents the operator from keeping at least one hand on the handlebars.
 11. Bicyclists must use hand signals to signal their intent to stop, turn left, or turn right. The bicyclist must use the following signals:
 - a. Stop – Extend the left hand and arm downward.
 - b. Left Turn – Extend the left hand and arm horizontally.
 - c. Right Turn – Extend the left hand and arm upward, or Extend the right hand and arm horizontally.
 12. Every bike must be equipped with a brake capable of making a braked wheel skid on dry, level, clean pavement.
 13. A bicyclist may not operate a bicycle at nighttime unless the bicycle is equipped with the following:
 - a. Headlamp – a lamp on the front of the bicycle that emits a white light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet in front of the bicycle.
 - b. Red Reflector / Red Lamp – A bicycle must be equipped with either a red reflector which is visible from a distance of 300 feet from the rear of the bicycle, or a red lamp visible from a distance of 500 feet from the rear of the bicycle.
1. Watch out for people opening car doors when you pass a parked motor vehicle.
 2. When riding on sidewalks, reduce your speed and exercise caution. Remember that there are no signs on sidewalks that regulate traffic flow so expect the unexpected.
 3. Be on the lookout for and avoid the following road surface hazards:
 - a. Loose sand, rocks, glass, and debris
 - b. Road expansion joints that run parallel with the front tire.
 - c. Standing water and puddles.
 - d. Drainage grates with holes that run parallel with the front tire.
 - e. Holes, cracks, and road edge deterioration or drop offs.
 - f. Railroad tracks that are not perpendicular to the direction of travel.
 4. Be extra careful if cycling in the rain. Remember the following:
 - a. Braking distance is increased because of wet rims and wet brake pads. Apply brakes earlier than you would in dry conditions.
 - b. Visibility is decreased. Wear brightly colored clothing.
 - c. Rain makes road surfaces, manhole covers, and painted stripes slicker. Slow down especially when turning.
 - d. Avoid puddles. You never know how deep a hole is if it is full of water.

5. WEAR YOUR HELMET! Although not required by Texas law, it is recommended that bicyclists wear a good quality bike helmet. Nearly 75-80% of cyclists killed or permanently disabled involve head or neck injuries.
6. Wear light colored or reflective clothing at night. Nearly 50% of the fatal Car/Bike accidents occur at night or in low light conditions.

Stop a Thief!

1. LOCK UP YOUR BIKE! Follow these guidelines when locking a bike:
 - a. Always lock your bike to a bicycle rack
 - b. Use a good quality “case-hardened” or “hardened” U-bolt lock.
 - c. Secure the U-bolt lock through the bike frame, the rear wheel, and the bicycle rack. If possible, remove the front wheel and secure it with the rear wheel and frame, or run a cable through both tires.



2. Engrave your driver's license number onto the bike frame. Also, write down the serial number of the bike and keep it where you can find it later.
3. If your bike is stolen on campus, report it immediately to the VC Police Department at (940) 552-6291 ext. 2272.