5 Skills to Bike Safely!

Every day millions of people safely ride bicycles for transportation. So can you!

Your safety on the road depends on five essential bicycling skills that can significantly reduce your risk of injury.

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Links and Resources

DMV Driver Handbook
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California’s Wireless Telephone Laws
UC Core Plus Defensive Driver Training Guidelines

That fluorescent orange triangle you usually see on the back of tractors, implements, forklifts, and other equipment on public roads is called a Slow Moving Vehicle or SMV emblem. It is intended to alert drivers of following vehicles to slow down for the SMV-signed vehicle in front that is travelling at 25 mph or much less. Tractors and forklifts typically may be going only 5 to 15 mph, presenting a real hazard on roads where other traffic may be going up to 55 mph.

Invented exactly 50 years ago in Ohio, the sign came about due to a documented high number of slow moving vehicle rear-end collisions leaving people dead or badly injured. The SMV sign is a US national standard, a Canadian standard, and is currently under review to become designated as an International Safety Standard.

But, more specifically here in California, it is part of the California Vehicle Code, with unique requirements of use and placement. Here are the key things to know:

1. Required on tractors, forklifts, “Gator” and “Mule” type ATVs, harvesters, farm trailers, and more.
2. Must be clean, unobstructed, and not faded.
3. Must be mounted with bottom edge between 3 and 5 feet from the ground (CA rule).
4. Must be mounted with triangle pointed upwards.
5. Must be mounted in the center or on the left side as close as possible to the center.
6. Must be covered or removed when the equipment is on a trailer (thus likely to move >25 mph)
7. Must not be used on stationary structures (gates, mailboxes, etc.)
8. Must not be on the front of a vehicle.

For California-specific rules, see http://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/3340.html
For Dept of Motor Vehicles, see http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/vctop/d12/vc24615.htm
For ASABE’s info, see http://www.asabe.org/awards-landmarks/asabe-historic-landmarks/smv-28.aspx
I don’t always pull a trailer, but when I do I prefer to do it safely, with all hitching, chaining, lighting, marking, braking, tying, driving, and other aspects configured properly.

Trailers are important to many functions both at work and at home, but many people do not realize or understand the many important guidelines and rules that must be followed to maintain safety and remain in lawful compliance. “MAKE SAFE” then “Think Safe. Act Safe. Be Safe.” should be everyone’s motto. So, let’s make safe our trailering with an initial focus on some key aspects of different trailers.

**Farm Trailer:** Usually designed to operate no faster than 25 mph, these trailers must have a Slow Moving Vehicle emblem mounted at the rear. (See related article in this Safety Spotlight.) Also, ensure you are using a safety chain or cable that is rated for the gross vehicle weight of the trailer you are pulling. On campus, these trailers should be pulled with a suitable tractor, a “1/2 ton” or higher rated pickup truck, or equivalent tow vehicle.

**Utility Trailer:** Utility trailers come in all sizes and shapes. They all require lighting, and many require their own brakes.

**Fifth-wheel Trailer:** These trailers have the “gooseneck” that hitches onto a receptacle mounted in the bed of a pickup truck, usually. These trailers often are rated for a trailer gross vehicle weight that requires a different license from the DMV. Of course, the large “18-wheeler” trucks and trailers on the road are typically “gooseneck” and require a special license, but a smaller one connected to a typical heavy duty pickup truck will also often require the special license.

**Surge brakes:** These types of brakes are usually hydraulically operated by a device on the trailer’s hitch. When the tow vehicle brakes, the forces on the hitch cause the system to apply direct pressure to the trailer’s brakes. These are often seen on “U-Haul” type trailers, because there is no need for wiring the tow vehicle with an electronic controller.

**Enclosed Trailer:** These trailers, usually a camping trailer or cargo trailer, when longer than say 10-feet often require a weight-distributing hitch. You will see this as a regular ball hitch plus two long bars from the hitch to the trailer. Every vehicle (from a little SUV to a large pickup) will have in its operators manual the towing capacity with a regular hitch and then a higher value with a weight-distributing hitch. Check it out before towing.

**Fishtailing:** This is not a type of trailer, but how a trailer swaying back and forth is often described. Why does this happen? Usually it is because there is not enough weight placed in front of the trailer’s axle(s). For bumper-hitch type trailers, about 10%-15% of the trailer+load weight needs to be upon the hitch.

**Separation:** This can bring a bunch of anxiety. Trailers do often come unhitched, for a variety of reasons. That is why chains or cables are required, and they must be rated for the gross vehicle weight of the trailer.

This was just a quick introduction to some key elements of trailers. You should consult your vehicle’s operator manual, the California DMV trailering regulations, your department safety coordinator, or fleet services manager for your specific needs. You can also take a look at UC-ANR’s trailering Safety Note (http://safety.ucanr.org/files/1488.pdf), DMV’s Recreational Vehicles and Trailer Handbook (http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/dl648/dl648.pdf), and another DMV publication at http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/dl648/dl648pt12.htm

Article by: Victor Duraj - Associate Development Engineer
Bicyclist Etiquette: How to Ride with Cars

Bicyclists on public roadways assume all the same rights and responsibilities as automobile drivers, and are subject to the same state laws and local ordinances. For everyone’s safety observe these bicycling rules:

- Ride with traffic
- Stop at all stop signs and red lights
- Use lights and reflectors at night
- Ride as near to the right as safely possible
- Use hand signals to indicate your intention to drivers
- Follow lane and highway markings as if you were a vehicle, ride single file
- Don’t block the road by riding two bikes abreast
- Honor others’ right of way
- Be predictable; ride in a straight line even with parked cars
- Children under 18 must wear a helmet
- Make eye contact with motorists to make sure they see you

Motorist Etiquette: How to Drive with Bikes

Sharing the road with other vehicles: bicycles

- Drivers of motor vehicles must treat bicycle riders the same as drivers of other motor vehicles
- Be aware bicyclists have legal access to the roadway and must obey stop signs, traffic lights and most other traffic laws and signs

UC Information Technology Awards

Eight teams representing six locations won the University of California’s 2013 Larry L. Sautter Award for using information technology to make university operations more efficient and better serve faculty, staff, students and patients.

The annual award, which is sponsored by the UC Information Technology Leadership Council, recognizes innovations in IT that advance the university’s missions of teaching, research, public service and patient care, or that improve the effectiveness of university processes. The award encourages sharing these solutions across the UC system. To be eligible for the award, projects must be active and operational at a UC campus.

Silver Awards
Risk Assessment Determinations in Chemical Academic Laboratories (RADiCAL) (UC Davis) promotes laboratory safety by identifying the risks involved with a project and the oversight required based on specific information the researcher provides, such as what chemical components they plan to use.

The award was established in 2000 and is named after Larry L. Sautter, a UC Riverside associate vice chancellor for computing and communications who died in 1999. Under his leadership, a modern data network, client server computing, and improved technical support services were developed and implemented at Riverside.

RADiCAL
Risk Assessment Determinations in Chemical Academic Laboratories is a web-based risk management tool that quickly determines a control-banded Standard Operating Procedure to provide researchers with pertinent information to safely conduct their research. The RADiCAL application was recently awarded the silver 2013 Larry Sautter award for Innovation in Information Technology and is currently available to all 10 University of California campuses.
• Special care must be used near bicyclists because any accident with them will probably result in serious injury
• Automobile drivers must leave safe passing room. Leave 3 feet of space as a buffer; if you are not sure you have enough room to pass, don’t
• Be patient
• When turning, you MUST not turn so close to them that the bicyclist is in danger of being hit
• Bicyclists can legally move to the left lane to turn left, to pass another vehicle or bicycle, or to avoid debris or parked cars
• Bicyclists may have to swerve to avoid a car door suddenly opening, glass, storm grates, dogs and other hazards on the road
• Expect any of these moves by bicyclists in a main traffic lane
• When the lane is too narrow to pass a bicyclist safely, wait until the next lane is clear and give the bicyclist all the rights of any other slow moving vehicle
• A motorist parked at a curb must not open a door on the traffic side of a vehicle without looking for other vehicles, including bicycles or motorcycles
• Bicycle riders may give right turn signals with their right arm held straight out or pointing right. Remember, bicycles are small and sometimes drivers to not see them.
• Don’t honk at bicyclists. Loud noise may startle the bicyclist and cause them to move into the lane of traffic.

From BicycleLA.org
Know where to turn on your UC campus for the information you need to keep yourself, your workplace and your environment safe and secure. Click on the campus links below to connect to local program, educational and informational resources.

UC Berkeley  UC Riverside  UCOP
UC Davis      UC San Diego  UC ANR
UC Irvine     UC San Francisco
UCLA         UC Santa Barbara
UC Merced    UC Santa Cruz

Dean’s Citation Presented at UCB

The newly established Dean’s Citation was awarded June 20, 2013 by College of Chemistry Dean Richard Mathies acknowledging the recipients for their efforts in recent enhancements to Laboratory Safety. Pictured are (l-r):

Brandon DeFrancisci, Associate Director of Health & Safety
Mark Freiberg, Executive Director of Environment, Health & Safety
Mike Kumpf, Director, College of Chemistry EHS&S Program

“Why is it never EASY?” Chastity demanded, her voice edging from outraged irritation into a grating whine of persecuted righteousness. “I used to know how to do this and now they changed the whole stupid thing around and I can’t find anything!”

Send an email to safetyspotlight@ucdavis.edu to submit your comments on the September 2013 issue or to suggest content ideas for future issues. We look forward to hearing from you!

Check out our October 2013 issue to learn important information on Fire Prevention.

Safety Spotlight is published at the beginning of each month except January and July. To subscribe and automatically receive editions upon publication, please email sympa@ucdavis.edu and type in a body of the email: SUBSCRIBE safetyspot.

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