

Summary of Missouri State Statutes Related to Bicycling

- Motorists may not do anything, even something that otherwise appears to be legal, that endangers a bicyclist, pedestrian, or other motorist. Safety, not speed, is the highest consideration in traffic law.
- In Missouri, bicycles and motorized bicycles may ride on any street except travel lanes of interstate highways or where prevented by local law.
- Bicyclists have the same rules, rights and responsibilities as other drivers. For example, bicyclists must stop at stop signs, signal turns, and drive on the right-hand side of the road.
- This means that motorists must treat bicycles as any other vehicle. For instance, do not pull out in front of a moving bicyclist, cut a bicyclist off, or pass a bicyclist unsafely.
- When traveling slower than traffic, bicyclists generally move to the right of the travel lanes, just as other slow moving vehicles do. But do not expect bicyclists to hug the curb, dodge in and out between parked cars, or ride on a debris-covered shoulder. Bicycling that way is not safe, and the law requires bicyclists to ride safely.
- If the lane is too narrow to safely share between a bicycle and a motor vehicle, the bicycle may move towards the center of the lane so as to discourage motor vehicles from dangerously squeezing past in the lane. If you see a bicyclist riding in the middle of the lane in this way, the bicyclist is following the law. Slow and wait behind the bicyclist until it is safe to move into the next lane to pass.
- Bicyclists may sometimes ride the shoulder of the road when available. But they are *not* required by law to do so. Obstacles in the shoulder such as glass, debris, or rough pavement may not be obvious to the motorist but may be very dangerous to the bicyclist.
- Bicycle lanes may not be blocked or used for parking. Motorists must signal and yield to any bicyclists in the lane before crossing a bicycle lane. As with shoulders, bicyclists may leave the bike lane for any number of reasons, including debris, obstacles, or to prepare for a turn.

Bicycle-related Quotes from the Missouri Driver Guide & Traffic Law

- “On public streets and highways, [bicyclists] have the same rights and responsibilities as a motor vehicle operator.”
- “If you are following a bicyclist and need to make a right turn, slow down and remain behind the cyclist until you are able to turn.”
- “Bicyclists change speed and lane position when encountering bad road conditions, such as manhole covers, diagonal railroad tracks, road debris, or in strong winds. Be ready to react.”
- “When you are passing, give bicycles and mopeds a full lane width. Do not squeeze past these road users. The bicycle is generally a slower moving vehicle and this may require you to slow down. Wait for a clear stretch of road before passing a cyclist in a lane too narrow to share.”
- "The operator of a motor vehicle overtaking a bicycle proceeding in the same direction . . . shall leave a safe distance when passing the bicycle, and shall maintain clearance until safely past the overtaken bicycle." Passing unsafely is a traffic offense punishable by driver license points, fines, and even jail, if a collision results.
- **“The law says who must yield the right-of-way; it does not give anyone the right-of-way.** You must do everything you can to prevent striking a pedestrian or another vehicle, regardless of the circumstances.”
- **“Sharing the road with others, in a considerate manner, makes the road safer for everybody!”**

Summary of Missouri State Statutes sources: Missouri State Statutes 300.330, 300.410, 304.012, 307.190, 307.191, and 307.678

Bicycle-related quotes sources: Missouri Driver Guide, January 2014 Edition, Chapters 4 and 7, and 304.678 RSMO



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Missouri State Law for Motorists Interacting with Bicyclists

307.188. Rights and duties of bicycle and motorized bicycle riders. Every person riding a bicycle or motorized bicycle upon a street or highway shall be granted all of the rights and shall be subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle as provided by chapter 304, RSMo, except as to special regulations in sections 307.180 to 307.193 and except as to those provisions of chapter 304, RSMo, which by their nature can have no application.

Explanation: Motorists must treat bicycles with the same regard as they would any other vehicle; bicyclists have the same rights under traffic law as do other vehicles. And, on the other hand, bicycles must obey the same traffic laws in the same way as motor vehicles, with very, very limited exceptions.

304.012. Highest Degree of Care. 1. Every person operating a motor vehicle on the roads and highways of this state shall drive the vehicle in a careful and prudent manner and at a rate of speed so as not to endanger the property of another or the life or limb of any person and shall exercise the highest degree of care.

Explanation: Motorists may not do anything, even something that otherwise appears to be legal, that endangers a bicyclist, pedestrian, or other motorist. Safety, not speed, is the highest consideration in traffic law.

304.678. 1. The operator of a motor vehicle overtaking a bicycle proceeding in the same direction on the roadway, as defined in section 300.010, RSMo, shall leave a safe distance, when passing the bicycle, and shall maintain clearance until safely past the overtaken bicycle.

2. Any person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of an infraction unless an accident is involved in which case it shall be a class C misdemeanor.

Explanation: When passing a bicycle, you must leave a safe distance when passing and not return to the right part of the road until safely past the bicyclist. Passing unsafely is a traffic offense punishable by driver license points, fines, and, if a collision results, even jail.

304.016.4 When passing is allowed. No vehicle shall at any time be driven to the left side of the roadway under the following conditions: (1) When approaching the crest of a grade or upon a curve of the highway where the driver's view is obstructed within such distance as to create a hazard in the event another vehicle might approach from the opposite direction;

Explanation: Motorists often attempt to pass bicyclists as they are traveling around curves or approaching the crest of a hill. But squeezing dangerously past the bicyclist and pulling blindly into the oncoming lane are both illegal. So if the lane is wide enough to pass the bicyclist, leaving a safe distance between your vehicle and the bicyclist, while remaining on the right half of the road, then you may pass if safe. However, if safely overtaking the bicyclist requires you to pull onto the left side of the roadway, then the law requires you to wait behind the bicyclist until your view ahead is clear.



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