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Cycling Laws and Ordinances

Charleston Police Department



This pamphlet is your guide to the rules of the road for cyclists in Charleston.

Whether you're commuting, exercising, or riding for leisure, understanding local and state cycling laws ensures safety for yourself and others.





Traffic Laws Apply to Bicyclists (Sec. 19-121)

When riding your bicycle on roadways:

- You have the same rights as drivers of vehicles.
- You must follow all the same traffic laws as motor vehicle drivers, unless otherwise stated.

Obey Traffic Control Devices (Sec. 19-122)

As a cyclist, you must:

- Follow traffic signals, signs, and other control devices just like cars.
- Obey “No Turn” signs unless you dismount and act as a pedestrian.

Riding on Sidewalks (Sec. 19-125)

General Rules

No riding on sidewalks unless exceptions apply, including:

- Children 12 years old and under riding bikes with wheels 24 inches or smaller.
- On designated shared-use paths at least 8 feet wide.
- On sidewalks adjacent to roads with a speed limit of 35 mph or higher (if there’s no bike lane).
- Avoid sidewalks in school zones or commercial areas on the peninsula unless permitted.



Safety Guidelines

- Yield to pedestrians at all times.
- Ride with due care and avoid reckless behavior.
- Do not cause damage to public or private property.



What’s Prohibited?

- Riding motorized bicycles, rickshaws, or pedicabs on sidewalks or shared-use paths.
- Special Rules for Officers:
- Police or code enforcement officers may ride on sidewalks when necessary to perform duties.

Penalties

- Violating sidewalk rules may result in a misdemeanor and a fine of up to \$50.00.

Be Safe, Be Seen, Be Responsible!

- Whether on the road or sidewalk, bicyclists must ride responsibly and share the space with others.
- Follow the laws to ensure a safe and enjoyable biking experience for everyone!