



(<https://www.bicyclecolorado.org/>)



# RULES OF THE ROAD

In Colorado, bicyclists and motorists have the same rights and responsibilities when using public roads. A big part of the Bicycle Colorado mission is to increase bicycling safety in Colorado. We've

**made great inroads by working with state legislators and regulations staff to change and improve laws to make them more bike-friendly.**

Here, we summarize Colorado's bicycle-related laws as they apply to people driving motor vehicles and people riding bicycles on roads, paths and mountain bike trails in Colorado.

Included are electric-assist bicycle laws and mountain bike trail access.

*This information is provided as a public service. It is not legal advice and should not be interpreted as such. Bicycle Colorado does not provide legal counsel.*



## Riding a bicycle on the road

- + Be courteous, share the road and obey all traffic laws, signs and signals.
- + Ride on the shoulder (if one exists) or on the right side of the road, *unless*:

- you feel that the shoulder or the right side of the road is unsafe\*, or
- you are preparing to make a left turn, or
- you are overtaking a slower-moving vehicle, or
- you are riding on a one-way road and would prefer to ride on the left side.

*\*When riding next to parked cars, allow enough space between your bike and the cars so that you do not have to suddenly change lane position if a car door is opened.*

**+ You may ride two abreast when doing so does not impede the flow of traffic. Ride single file to allow vehicles to pass.**

**+ When riding curving canyon roads without bike lanes or shoulders, play it safe and ride single file.**

**+ Signal turns for 100 feet in advance, unless you need both hands to brake or control your bicycle.**

- You may use either arm to signal a right turn. Either point to the right or raise your left arm in an “L” shape.

**+ At night, ride with a white front light and a red rear light or reflector.**

**+ Yield to pedestrians.**



*If a person driving a motor vehicle behaves aggressively or dangerously, dial \*CSP (\*277) from your cell phone to reach the Colorado State Patrol. You'll need to provide the vehicle license plate number (mandatory), location and direction of travel, vehicle and driver description and a description of the aggressive behavior.*



# IMBA Rules of the Trail

*Most land management agencies have adopted these guidelines provided by the International Mountain Bicycling Association. Be aware that some agencies will ticket mountain bikers witnessed not riding within these limits.*

- **Ride Open Trails:** Respect trail and road closures — ask a land manager for clarification if you are uncertain about the status of a trail. Do not trespass on private land. Obtain permits or other authorization as required. Be aware that bicycles are not permitted in areas protected as state or federal Wilderness.
- **Leave No Trace:** Be sensitive to the dirt beneath you. Wet and muddy trails are more vulnerable to damage than dry ones. When the trail is soft, consider other riding options. This also means staying on existing trails and not creating new ones. Don't cut switchbacks. Be sure to pack out at least as much as you pack in.
- **Control Your Bicycle:** Inattention for even a moment could put yourself and others at risk. Obey all bicycle speed regulations and recommendations, and ride within your limits.
- **Yield Appropriately:** Do your utmost to let your fellow trail users know you're coming — a friendly greeting or bell ring are good methods. Try to anticipate other trail users as you ride around corners. *Bicyclists should yield to other non-motorized trail users, unless the trail is clearly signed for bike-only travel. Bicyclists traveling downhill should*

*yield to ones headed uphill, unless the trail is clearly signed for one-way or downhill-only traffic.* In general, strive to make each pass a safe and courteous one.

- **Never Scare Animals:** Animals are easily startled by an unannounced approach, a sudden movement or a loud noise. Give animals enough room and time to adjust to you. When passing horses, use special care and follow directions from the horseback riders (ask if uncertain). Running cattle and disturbing wildlife are serious offenses.
- **Plan Ahead:** Know your equipment, your ability and the area in which you are riding and prepare accordingly. Strive to be self-sufficient: keep your equipment in good repair and carry necessary supplies for changes in weather or other conditions. Always wear a helmet and appropriate safety gear.





## Riding a bicycle on a multi-use path

- + Ride to the right and warn other path users before overtaking and passing them. Give an audible signal of your intent to pass or ring your bell.
- + Note that many multi-use paths have a 15 mph speed limit.



# Driving a motor vehicle

- + Be courteous, share the road and obey all traffic laws, signs and signals.
- + When passing a bicyclist, *allow at least three feet of space* between the widest point of your vehicle and the widest point of the cyclist (this is a law in Colorado). To pass a cyclist safely, you may cross a double yellow center line when oncoming traffic is clear.
- + It is often illegal for bicyclists to ride on sidewalks. They should be riding with traffic, not against it.



## Riding an eBike in Colorado

In 2017, Bicycle Colorado helped pass a law that clarified eBike standards and classifications statewide, which improved labeling and enforcement. To learn all about eBikes, visit [PeopleForBikes.org](http://www.peopleforbikes.org/pages/e-bikes) (<http://www.peopleforbikes.org/pages/e-bikes>).

- + Local governments have ultimate control over where eBikes can be ridden. They are allowed on roads and have the same rights as non-electric-assist bicycles.
- + In most cities, eBikes are *not* permitted to be ridden using the electric-assist when on paved bike/pedestrian paths (except in Boulder, Superior, Breckenridge and Vail).
- + Electric-assist mountain bikes (eMTBs) are allowed on trails in all 42 Colorado state parks that allow mountain biking (please **check which ones** (<http://cpw.state.co.us/>) before you go). Rules for city and county trails vary greatly. Always check with the land manager before you attempt to ride an eMTB on dirt trails/singletrack. Do NOT ride your eMTB on a dirt trail if the rules are unclear. Always follow IMBA's Rules of the Trail (above) and ride courteously.
- + On federal lands, eMTBs are considered "motorized vehicles" and generally only permitted on trails that also allow motorized travel (like ATVs, motorbikes, etc.). Check with the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management or other governing agency before you attempt to ride an eMTB on public trails.

### **Colorado State Patrol explains the 3 Feet to Pass law**

**9News video about Colorado's rules of the road**



# State of Colorado bicycling laws

We do our best to keep the information below as up-to-date as possible.

## + Operation of bicycles and other human-powered vehicles

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## + Overtaking a vehicle on the left

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## + When lighted lamps are required

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## + Bicycle and personal mobility device equipment

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## + Pedestrians' right-of-way in crosswalks

**+ Powers of local authorities**

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