



# Bicycle traffic rules

Bicycles are easy and very convenient means of transportation. But some cyclists don't take traffic rules seriously and ride bicycles recklessly. Also there are traffic accidents caused by cyclists.

Bicycles are categorized as light vehicles. As a cyclist, make sure to follow traffic rules and ride safely in order not to harm anybody.

## BICYCLE SAFETY RULES



- 1 Proceed on the left hand side of the road. Bicycles are allowed to proceed on sidewalks for limited cases only. Pedestrians have the right of way.
- 2 At intersections, make sure to follow traffic lights and stop signs.
- 3 Make sure to turn your bicycle light on at night.
- 4 Don't drink and ride.
- 5 Always wear a properly fitted helmet.

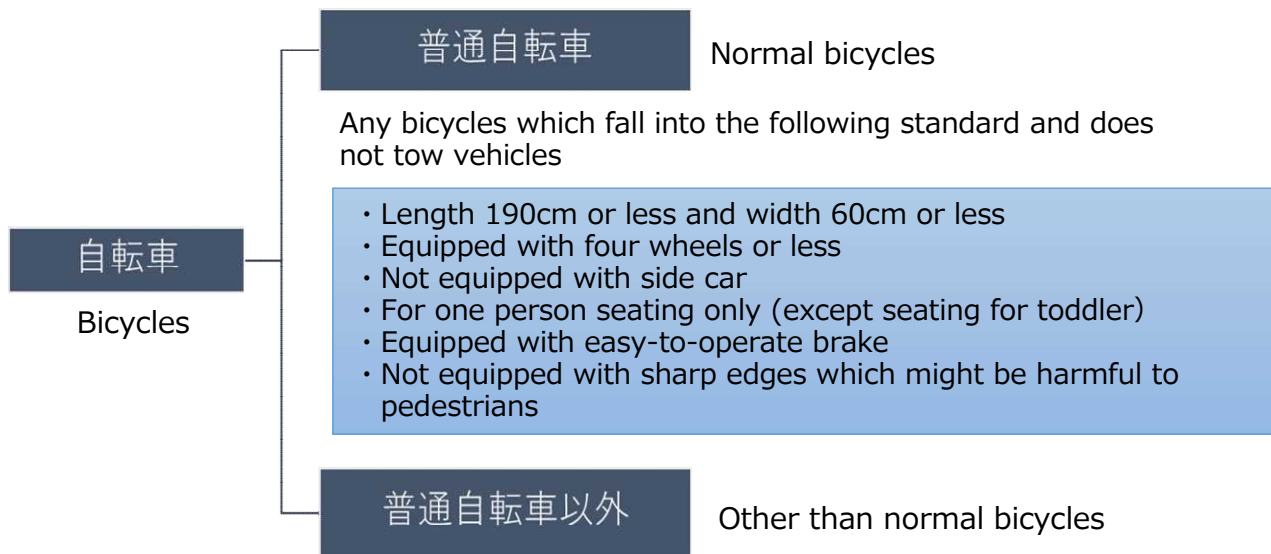




## What are bicycles?

In accordance with the Road Traffic Law of Japan, bicycles are considered to fall in the same category as light cars.

If bicycles are as per the government standard in terms of its size and structure and do not tow vehicles, they are categorized as normal type.





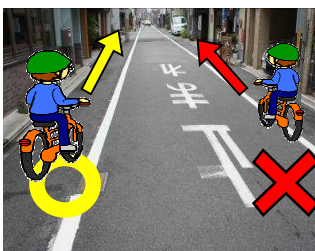
### ● Proceed on roads

Bicycles are classified as “vehicles” and must travel on vehicle roads wherever there is a distinction between “sidewalks” and “vehicle lanes”.

Where there are “sidewalks” and “vehicle lanes”, bicycles travel along the left side of the lanes. Where there is no sidewalk, bicycles travel along the left side of roads.

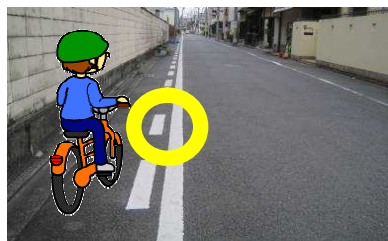
- Roads with bicycle lanes
  - Normal type bicycles must proceed on bicycle lanes.
  - ※Bicycles other than normal type ones
    - Bicycles, tricycles, and quadricycles (within the length of 190cm and width 60cm) are allowed to travel on bicycle lanes(except ones with side car or towing other vehicles) .
- Roads with side lanes
  - Bicycles can proceed on side lanes.
  - (except on pedestrian side lanes or when bicycle passing interferes with pedestrians.)

Side lane



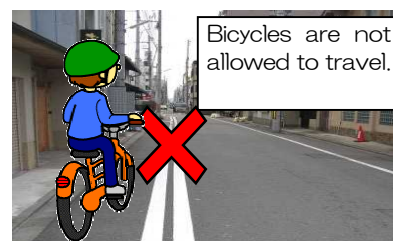
Single white line

Side lane where vehicle parking is prohibited



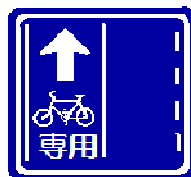
White & wavy line

Pedestrian side lane



Double white lines

- Roads with bicycle lanes
  - On roads with bicycle lanes, bicycles must proceed on the lanes.



<Sign Plate>



<Keep Left>

## 1 Proceed on the left side of roads. No travel on side walks. Pedestrian priority.



### ● Exceptional cases when bicycles are allowed to travel on sidewalks

As a general rule, bicycles must proceed on roads. However, bicycles are allowed to proceed on sidewalks

- where there are following signs,



<Road Surface Sign>



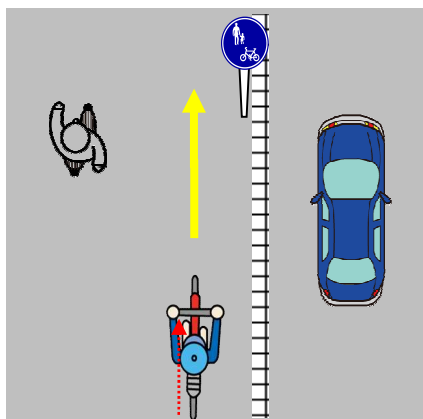
<Sign Plate>

- when a cyclist is whether the age of 70 or older, under the age of 13 or has physical challenges,
- when it is necessary to ensure safety of bicycles in traffic congestions.

On sidewalks bicycles must travel in reduced speed on the road side. Bicycles must proceed in reduced speed on bicycle lanes wherever they are available.

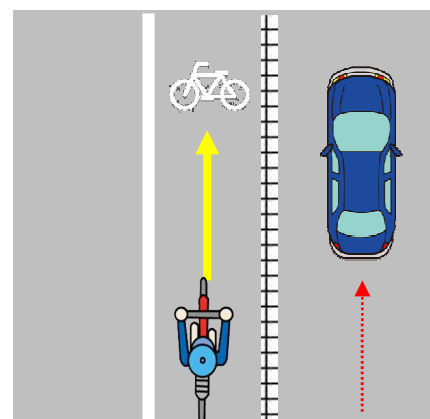
Bicycles must stop not to interfere with pedestrians. Bicycles are expected to proceed in an adequate manner and speed depending on sidewalk conditions.

### Proceed on sidewalk



<Sidewalk> <Road>

### Proceed on designated bicycle lane



<Sidewalk> <Road>

**[Penalty]** Imprisonment of up to 3 months or fine of up to 50,000 yen



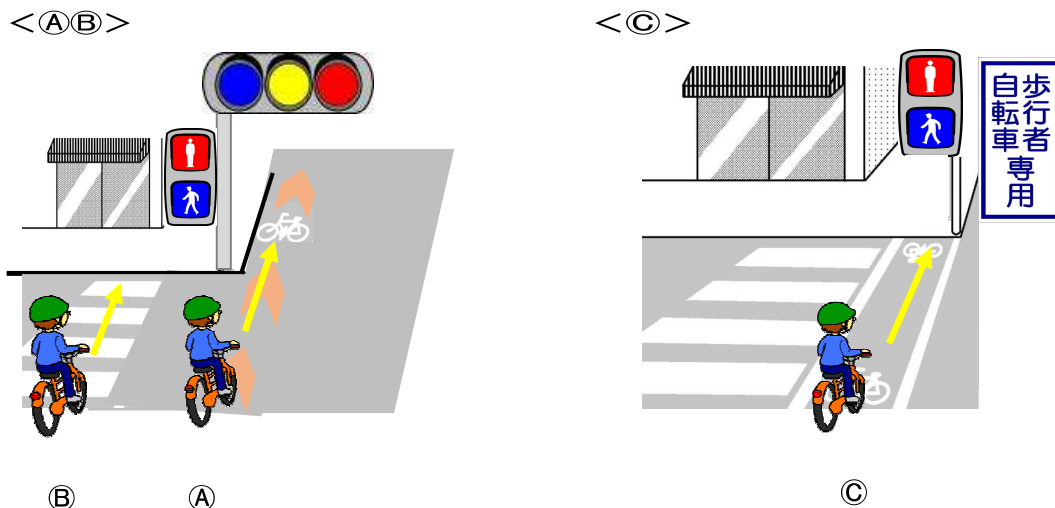
### ● Obey traffic signals

Bicycles must obey traffic signals.

- Traffic signals
  - Traffic signals for vehicles (below ㉠)
  - Traffic signals for pedestrians (for normal bicycles only) (below ㉢)
  - Traffic signals for pedestrians/cyclists (below ㉡)
- What traffic signal colors mean?

	Blue	Yellow	Red
traffic signals for vehicles	Can go straight/turn left	Must not overpass the stop line	Must not overpass the stop line
Traffic signals for pedestrians/bicycles	Can go straight/turn left	Flashing blue: Must not initiate crossing	Must not initiate crossing. Must not overpass the stop line
Traffic signals for pedestrians(for normal bicycles only)	Can go straight/turn left on pedestrian crossing	Flashing blue: Must not initiate crossing on pedestrian crossing	Must not initiate crossing on pedestrian crossing

- Bicycle crossing
  - At a place where there is bicycle crossing zone...  
bicycle may proceed on the zone.
  - At a place where there is NO bicycle crossing zone...  
bicycles can proceed on the pedestrian crossing zone when there are no pedestrians crossing.  
In case riding bicycles interfere with pedestrians, you may walk with your bicycle.



[Penalty] Imprisonment of up to 3 months, or fine of up to 50,000 yen



### ● Follow stop signs at intersections

As entering and crossing intersections, bicycles must proceed at safe speed while paying attention to “vehicles crossing intersections”, “vehicles about to turn right travelling from the opposite direction” and “pedestrians crossing roads”.

#### ○ Intersections with stop sign

At places with this stop sign, bicycles must stop

- right before the stop line, or
- right before intersections if there is no stop line

and make sure that there are no traffics travelling from both sides.

#### ○ Intersections with poor visibility

Bicycles must proceed with caution at intersections with poor visibility.

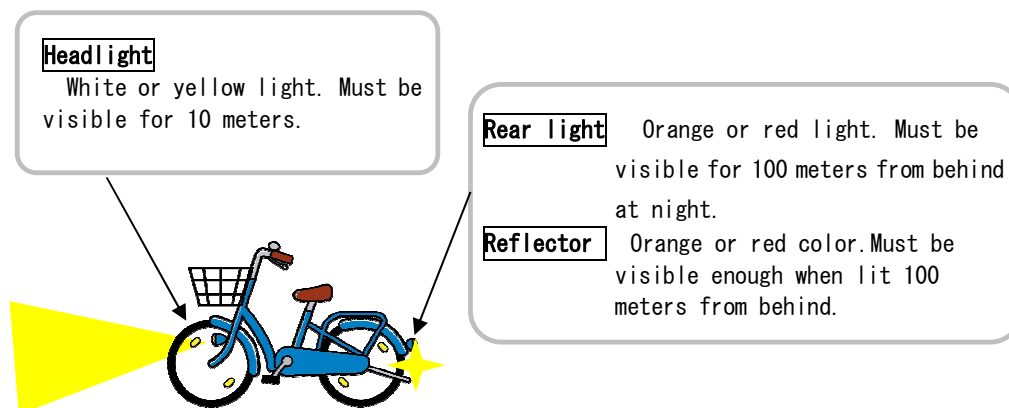


[Penalty] Imprisonment of up to 3 months or fine of 50,000 yen



### ● Turn on your headlights at night

Without turning the bicycle light on, you are not visible enough and it is very dangerous. Make sure to turn the bicycle light on at night. Don't ride bicycles not equipped with headlights and reflectors.



[Penalty] Fine of up to 50,000 yen



- **Drunk cycling is prohibited**

Riding bicycle after the consumption of alcohol is very dangerous and it is prohibited as in cases of cars.

Also you must not lend bicycles to those who are drunk or serve alcohol who is likely to ride while intoxicated.



[Penalty] Imprisonment of up to 5 years or a fine of up to 1 million yen (in case of drunk riding)



- **Wear a properly fitted helmet**

In order to reduce casualties stemming from traffic accidents, cyclists are expected to wear a properly fitted helmet.

※ In Kyoto Prefecture, parents and guardians must ensure that children of 6 years-old or younger wear a properly fitted helmet as riding bicycles.



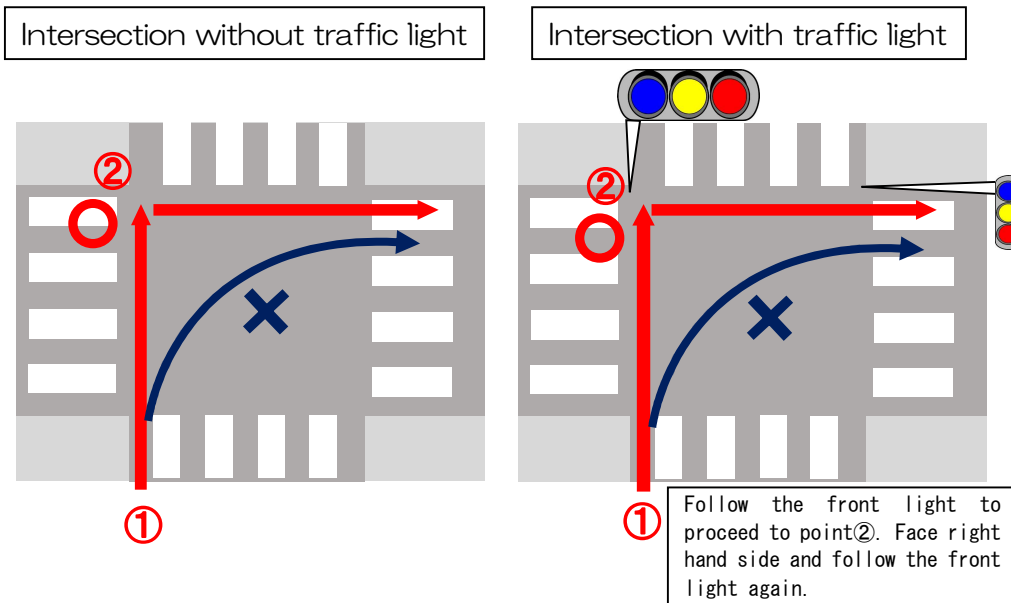
[No penalty]





● **Left turn and right turn at an intersection**

- In case of left turn...Always keep left at reduced speed. Follow the traffic light (if any) in front of you.
- In order to turn right...As shown below, always keep left at reduced speed. Follow the traffic light (if any) in front of you. Don't cross the intersection diagonally.



【Penalty】 Fine of up to 20,000 yen

● **No abrupt change of lanes**

Bicycles must not change lanes suddenly as approaching vehicles from behind are forced to jam on the brakes abruptly.

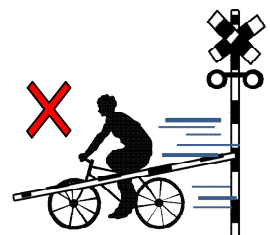
Pay attention to approaching traffics from behind as you change lanes.

【Penalty】 Fine of up to 50,000 yen

● **Railroad crossing**

At railroad, bicycles must stop before crossing in order to ensure safety.

At a railroad crossing, if the path is barred, about to be barred or an alarm sounds, you must not proceed onto the railroad.



【Penalty】 Imprisonment for up to 3 months or fine of up to 50,000 yen





- **Use of horn**

Cyclists must honk as they pass intersections or curves with poor visibility and where traffic sign is shown to honk.

You must not honk unless you are at places as above. However you may honk when it is necessary to avoid danger.

【Penalty】 A fine of up to 50,000 yen

- **Distract riding**

- **Portable phones**

You must not chat or text on your portable phone while riding bicycle.



- **Earphones and head phones**

You must not wear earphones/head phones while riding bicycle. Doing so may hamper you from being able to hear vital sounds/voices such as alarm horn, emergency vehicle siren or instruction of police officers.

※ Cyclists are obliged to ride bicycles in a safe manner including not to use portable phones, earphones or head phones while riding.

- **Don't hold an umbrella while riding.**

Be it rain or shine, you aren't allowed to hold an umbrella in one hand as you ride except on roads with scarce traffic.



【Penalty】 Fine of up to 50,000 yen

- **No reckless riding**

Reckless riding is vicious and dangerous. Riding in such a manner could cause serious traffic accidents.

Cyclists are also subject to law enforcement if he/she commits following violations in order to interfere with other traffics.

Not following correct traffic lanes,  
Abrupt braking, Changing traffic lanes where prohibited, Overpassing in wrong manners, Unnecessary bell ringing,  
Riding intentionally closer to other cyclists



※ 不必要な急ブレーキなど

【Penalty】 Imprisonment of up to 3 years or fine of up to 500,000 yen



● **Riding tandem on one single bike is prohibited**

Riding bicycle in tandem is very dangerous as cyclists could be unstable.

※ However, riding double is allowed in following cases,

- ① when a cyclist of 16 years-old or older rides a bicycle with one infant.
- ② when a cyclist of 16 years-old or older rides a special bicycle with two infants.
- ③ when a cyclist of 16 years-old or older rides a bicycle with one infant in the seat and the other carrying on his/her back in secure manner.

**Cyclist of 16 y/o or older having infant(s) on bicycle**

- Infants of 6 y/o or younger can be seated in infant seat.
- Infants of 5 y/o or younger can be held on the back of cyclist.

<Having one infant>

①

An infant sitting on back of the seat

No holding in front

An infant carried on the back of cyclist

<Having two infants>

※ Special bicycle equipped with double-infant seats

②

Front & rear seats

③

An infant in seat & the other carried on the back of cyclist

【Penalty】 Fine of up to 50,000 yen

● **Two bicycles riding side by side is prohibited**

Two bicycles riding side by side occupies wider space and can be dangerous to other traffics.

At a place where you see "Riding side by side allowed" road sign, up to two bikes can be allowed to travel that way.

【Penalty】 Fine of up to 20,000 yen

● **In case of traffic accidents**

If you have a traffic accident while riding on your bicycle, you must stop in order to take care of injured persons and take necessary measures to prevent further damages. Also you must call police.

【Penalty】 Imprisonment of up to 1 year or fine of up to 1 million yen



# 15 dangerous ridings

If you do following conducts twice or more in 3 years, you will be ordered to take bicycle safety class.

<p><b>Reckless riding</b></p> <p><small>※ 不要な急ブレーキなど</small></p>	<p><b>Running a red light</b></p>	<p><b>Riding where prohibited</b></p>
<p><b>Illegal riding on sidewalks</b></p>	<p><b>Riding on wrong lanes</b></p>	<p><b>Obstructing pedestrians on side lane</b></p>
<p><b>Passing barred train crossings</b></p>	<p><b>Obstructing crossing traffic having right of the way</b></p>	<p><b>Hampering incoming traffic at right turn</b></p>
<p><b>Violation of safe proceeding in round about</b></p>	<p><b>Not stopping at designated places</b></p>	<p><b>Inappropriate riding on sidewalk</b></p>
<p><b>Riding bike with malfunctioned break</b></p>	<p><b>Drunk cycling</b></p>	<p><b>Not riding in a proper manner</b></p>

Once you are ordered to a take safety class...

You have to complete your class in a designated period within 3 months.

The class takes 3 hours and includes personal instructions depending on your infraction.

Class fee: JPY6,000

Fine of up to

**50,000 yen**

if you do not take class



### ○ Have you heard about these bicycle accidents?

In Kanagawa Prefecture, a college student on her electric-bicycle collided with a pedestrian while she was using her smartphone. The pedestrian died due to brain contusion. The college student was sentenced to imprisonment of 2 years with 4 years of suspension.

In Ibaragi Prefecture, a college student on his non-lit mountain bicycle crashed with a pedestrian while he was looking into his smartphone. The pedestrian hit his head hard and died. The case was sent to the public prosecutors office on suspicion of aggravated negligence causing death.

Cyclists bear heavy responsibility once he/she causes traffic accidents. If you think, “accidents while riding bicycle are no serious matters.”, it is completely wrong. Under the Japanese traffic law, bicycles are classified as light vehicles. If you violate the law and cause traffic accidents, you are liable both in criminal and civil matters.

#### Criminal responsibility

You can be charged with aggravated negligence causing injuries/death if victim injures/dies.

#### Civil responsibility

You bear responsibility to compensate the damage suffered by victim.

### ○ Compensation cases

Amount of compensation could be elevated due to seriousness of damage.

Amount	Accident summaries
95.21million yen	When an eleven-year-old elementary school boy was on the way home at night on his bicycle, he collided head-to-head with a pedestrian (62 year-old lady) on the vehicle road. The lady suffered from skull fracture and became unconscious. (Ruled at Kobe District Court on July 4, 2013)
92.66million yen	In a day time, as a high school student started to diagonally cross the road from sidewalk far away before the bicycle-crossing zone, he collided with a company employee (42 years old) riding his bicycle on the opposite lane. The employee sustained serious loss of language cognition function. (Ruled at Tokyo District Court on June 5, 2008)
67.79million yen	In the evening, a man, holding a plastic beverage bottle in his hand, travelled on his bicycle down the slope without reducing speed to enter into an intersection and crashed with a lady of 38 years old who was walking on pedestrian crossing. Three days later the lady died due to brain bruise. (Ruled at Tokyo District Court on September 30, 2003)
54.38million yen	In a day time, a man on his bicycle, ignoring the traffic light, entered into an intersection at high speed and crashed with a woman (55 years old) who was passing along the pedestrian crossing with blue signal. The woman died of skull injuries 11 days after the incident. (Ruled at Tokyo District Court on April 11, 2007)
40.43million yen	In the evening, a high school student passed red light on the pedestrian crossing at an intersection and crashed with a motorbike driven by a 62 years-old man. The man died of skull injuries 13 days later.

## Insure your bicycle !

~Insuring your bicycle is mandatory in Kyoto Prefecture.~