



Other Road Riding Tips

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This information from the Pennsylvania Bicycle Driver's Manual is from the Rodale Press publication "Street Smarts", by John S. Allen, with illustrations by George Retseck and project management by Pat Brown. Project management at the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation was by David Bachman.

Road Riding

GETTING ACROSS NON-STANDARD INTERSECTIONS

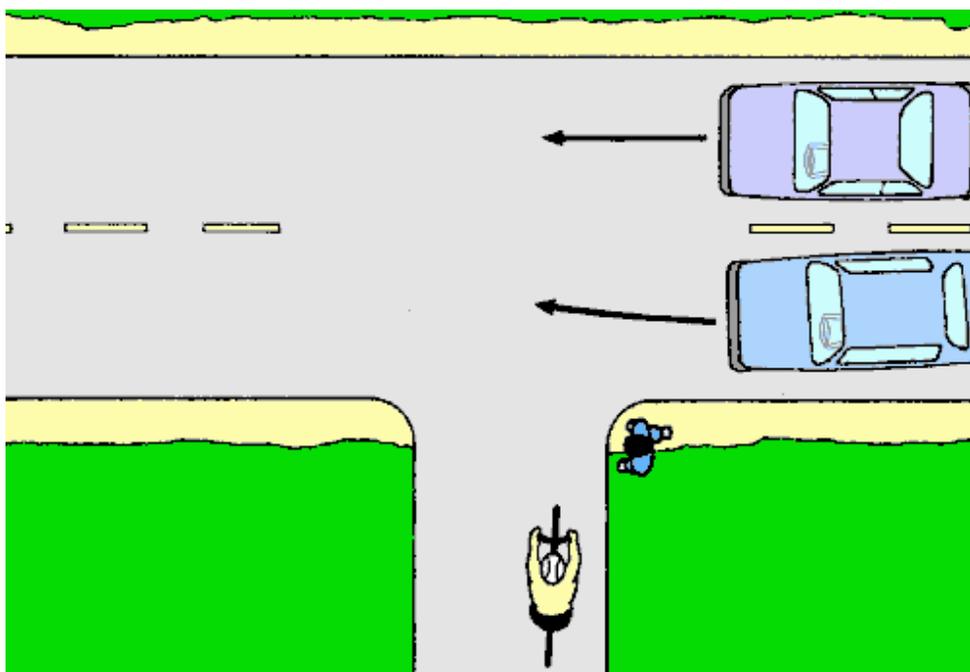
Not all intersections are of the standard, "crossroads" type. Though the same principles of lane positioning apply to all intersection maneuvers, some situations can be confusing and deserve a second look.

ENTERING THE ROAD

Bicyclists sometimes will ride against traffic or take unusual routes across intersections to get to their lane positions. Don't do it!

Instead, look for a good place to enter, where you can start out with a normal intersection maneuver: a left or right turn, or a lane change to merge into traffic. The traffic laws apply as soon as you're on the road, and even if you have to walk your bike half a block to a driveway, a legal start is much safer. Besides, you often get started faster, since you can then move with the normal flow of traffic.

When entering the road from a narrow driveway, ride down its middle. A pedestrian could be approaching on the sidewalk from either side, and a car could be about to enter the driveway from either direction. By placing yourself in the middle, you can see in both directions equally well.



When entering the road, look left, but always look right as well for pedestrians and overtaking cars.

Even when preparing for a right turn onto a rural highway, look left, right, left, and then right again. A car approaching from your right can pull out to pass very quickly and head for you in the lane you're about to enter.

DIAGONAL INTERSECTIONS

Traffic follows the usual rules at a diagonal intersection, but it's harder for drivers to look into the diagonal cross street behind them. Be especially careful of vans and trucks, which have a right rear blindspot.

Some of the turns in a diagonal intersection aren't very sharp, so cars may not slow down very much. Be alert to oncoming left-turning traffic, and be sure the drivers have seen you.

ON- AND OFF- RAMPS

When you're riding along a road and an on-ramp comes in from the right, stay in your normal lane position. Traffic from behind you on the ramp will first pass to your right, and then to your left.

An off-ramp is much like a right-turn lane, except that the traffic is faster. If you're going straight and the ramp goes off to the right, stay in your normal traffic position, to its left. The exiting traffic will pass you on your right, and the through traffic to pass you on your left.

When you're passing an off-ramp, exiting drivers may hesitate to pass you on the right. It's effective to stay a little farther to the left than usual and make a left-turn signal. Drivers can see your hand signal for hundreds of feet behind you, so it's useful even when cars are traveling at highway speed.

A one-way roadway can have on- and off-ramps to the left side. When entering on a ramp from the left, ride along its left side, then the left side of the roadway until you can cross to your normal lane position. When exiting on a ramp to the left, cross to the left before the ramp and ride on the left side of the ramp.

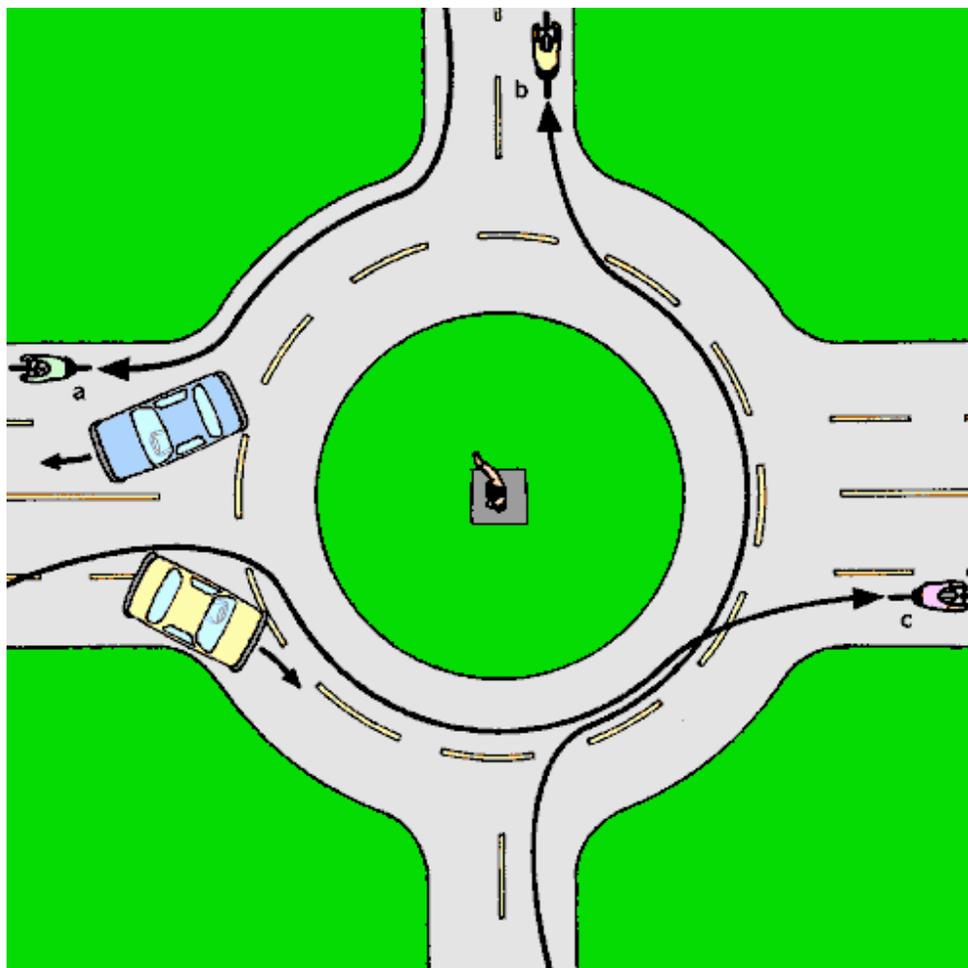
Sometimes two roadways will join or divide, but the total number of lanes will stay the same: For example, a couple of one-lane roads can join into a single two-lane one-way road. In high-speed traffic, it's best to ride along the edge, as with ramps. When entering or exiting from the left in slower traffic, you may ride on the right side of the left road, so you avoid having to cross as many lanes.

TRAFFIC CIRCLES

A traffic circle is a left-curving street with several side streets going off to the right.

The right lane of a traffic circle, then, is a right-turn lane used by entering and exiting traffic. Enter the traffic circle in the right lane if you're going to turn right at the first exit. But if you're going past the first exit, change lanes to the inside as you enter the circle. Ride around at the outer edge of the inside lane. It sometimes helps to make a left-turn signal while in the inside lane; drivers then feel comfortable about passing you on the right as they exit the circle.

Change back to the outside lane as you approach your exit. Use your normal tactics and hand signals for lane-changing.



In a traffic circle or rotary intersection, a) Keep to the right if you will take the first exit, b) and c), Ride in the inside lane if you are going past the first exit.

Because of the traffic circle's left curve, cars go straight to turn right. For this reason, it's especially dangerous to cross an exit of a traffic circle in the right lane. Bicyclists who always keep to the right will tell you that traffic circles are very dangerous. On the other hand, you'll find it surprisingly easy to ride around in the inside lane. Drivers don't go very fast there, since they follow the curve.

TWO LEFT TURNS IN A ROW

Sometimes you need to make two left turns quickly, one after the other; for example, if you're turning left at an intersection and then turning left into a driveway at the middle of the block.

In this case, don't head for the right side of the street after the first left turn. You may not have time to change lanes to the left again. Finish your first left turn in the correct lane to begin your second left turn.

LEFT TURNS ON ONE-WAY STREETS

If a one-way street is two or more lanes wide, laws in most states allow you to ride at either side. When you make a left turn from a one-way street onto another one-way street, it's easiest to ride around the corner on the left.

And there they are -- the difficult intersection types. Once you can handle these, you can ride just about anywhere. You can even figure out how to handle intersections not described here by using the principles of lane changing and positioning on which all intersection maneuvers are based.

[Steer out of trouble](#) >

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