

CALIFORNIA BIKE LAWS

This is a summary of bicycle provisions of the California Vehicle Code. Readers should check the Vehicle Codes for more detailed information and actual wording.

21200 Every person riding a bicycle upon a highway has all rights and is subject to all the provisions applicable to the driver of a vehicle.

21200.5 It is unlawful for any person to ride a bicycle upon a highway while under the influence of an alcoholic beverage or any drug.

21201 Bicycles must be equipped with a brake able to make one braked wheel skid on dry, level pavement.

Handlebars must not be higher than the rider's shoulders.

The bicycle must be small enough for the rider to stop, support it with a foot on the ground, and restart safely.

Every bicycle operated at night must have the following equipment:

- A lamp emitting white light and visible for 300 feet to the front and sides of the bicycle. May be attached to the bicycle or the rider.
- A red rear reflector, which shall be visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear.
- White or yellow reflector on each pedal visible from the front and rear of the bicycle from a distance of 200 feet.
- A white or yellow side reflector on the front portion of the bicycle and a white or red reflector on the rear portion of the bicycle or reflectorized tires.

21202 Bicycles traveling less than the normal speed of traffic must ride as close to the right as practicable, except in the following situations:

- When passing another bicycle or vehicle.
- When preparing for a left turn.
- To avoid hazards that make it unsafe to stay to the right.
- When approaching a place where a right turn is authorized.

On one-way streets, bicyclists may ride as near the left as practicable.

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- 21303 Bicyclists may not attach the bicycle or themselves to any streetcar or vehicle on the roadway.
- 21404 Bicycle must have a permanent seat.

Passengers must have a separate seat. Passengers 4 years old and younger, or weighing 40 pounds or less, must have protection from moving parts, and wear a helmet meeting ANSI or SNELL standards.
- 21205 Bicyclists may not carry any package or article that prevents them from keeping at least one hand on the handlebars.
- 21208 Whenever a bicycle lane has been established on a roadway, a bicyclist shall ride within that lane. The bicyclist may move out of the lane when:
1. Overtaking and passing another bicycle, vehicle or pedestrian within the lane.
 2. Preparing for a left turn at an intersection or private road or driveway.
 3. Reasonably necessary to avoid debris or other hazardous conditions.
 4. Approaching a place where a right turn is authorized.
- 21210 It is illegal to leave a bicycle on its side on a sidewalk, or park it in any way that blocks pedestrian traffic.
- 21212 **Any persons 17 years of age or younger must wear a helmet meeting ANSI or SNELL standards when operating a bicycle.**
- 21650.1 Bicyclist must ride in the same direction as the flow of traffic.
- 21960 Bicyclist may not ride on freeways where signs prohibit it.
- 27400 Bicyclist may not wear earplugs in both ears or a headset covering both ears. This section does not apply to hearing aids.

For more information on California's Bike Laws, please visit the following website:

www.dmv.ca.gov/about/bicycle.htm