

Do Bicyclists Have to Obey Traffic Laws?

Q. I grew up in Germany, where the same traffic laws apply to motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians alike. Are there any traffic laws that apply to bicyclists here? I see bicyclists riding on the left and on the right sides of the road, riding through red lights and even riding on sidewalks.

—U.M., Tuckahoe, N.Y.

A. Bicyclists must follow most of the same laws and regulations as drivers, including signaling, riding on the right side of the road and obeying traffic signs and signals. Article 34 of the New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law describes in detail the rules and regulations that are applicable specifically to bicyclists, who can receive tickets for violations. (For more information, see the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles' website at www.nysdmv.com.)

Through ongoing educational efforts, AAA encourages bicyclists and motorists to share the road in a safe and respectful manner. For instance, AAA clubs statewide include a segment on how to safely interact with bicyclists in their Driver Improvement Program classes.

For more information about bike safety, see Automotive Editor Joseph D. Younger's feature on page 26. In addition, AAA New York teaches kids bike safety through its Bike Rodeo program (see page 50).