

Spring 2009 Road Rules

In each issue of the Township Newsletter, the West Goshen Police Traffic Safety Unit will provide information on sections of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code that may inform readers on the requirements of these sections and the penalties for violating these sections.

Did you know that bicycles are subject to the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code? Chapter 35 of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code specifically spells out that bicycle operators must follow the same laws a motor vehicle drivers when on public roadways, including observance of stop signs and traffic signals, riding on the right side of the road, the use turn and brake signals (including hand signals when electronic signals are not available), the requirement of a headlight when driving at night, and allowing traffic to pass on the left. Additionally, Chapter 35 contains laws specifically for bicycle operators, including:

- Section 3503: A parent or legal guardian of a minor may be held responsible if that child violates any vehicle laws while operating a bike on a public street. *Parents may be responsible for civil damages if their child is involved in an accident while violating vehicle laws.*
- Section 3504: The number of passengers on a bicycle may not exceed the number of seats (including securely attached child-carriers) on the bike. *Passengers on handlebars, bike pegs, or in an adult's lap are prohibited.*
- Section 3505(b): On roads with shoulders, bicycle operators may ride in the shoulder in the same traffic direction as the adjacent vehicle lane. *See Section 3511 for restrictions about riding in the shoulder of freeways such as Route 202.*
- Section 3505(e): Bicyclists shall not ride more than two abreast on roadways. *This provision does not apply to dedicated bike paths wide enough for multiple bikes.*
- Section 3506: Bicycle operators must keep at least one hand on the handlebars while riding. *Packages, bundles, or articles requiring the use of two hands while riding are expressly prohibited.*
- Section 3507(a): In addition to a headlight that must be visible for a minimum of 500 feet to the front, a red reflector visible to a minimum distance of 500 feet must be mounted on the rear of a bike used for nighttime riding. In addition, bicycles used at night need to be equipped with amber reflectors on the left and right sides. Additional white front and red rear flashing lights may be added to increase visibility. The bicycle operator may wear the lights provided they meet the minimum distance requirements. *Lights and reflectors serve primarily to make the bicyclist visible to other vehicles and secondarily to illuminate the bicyclist's path.*
- Section 3508: Anyone riding a bicycle on a sidewalk must surrender right-of-way to pedestrians. Bicyclists must give an audible signal prior to passing pedestrians or other bicycle operators. *Proper etiquette is to announce "Passing to the left" prior to overtaking a pedestrian or cyclist.* Bicycles are prohibited on sidewalks in business districts unless permitted by traffic control devices or if a sidewalk has a designated bicycle-only lane.
- Section 3510: Any person under 12 must wear a bicycle helmet meeting national standards for safety and protection when operating or riding as a passenger on a bicycle, in a mounted bicycle restraining seat, or when towed in a bicycle trailer. *The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation strongly recommends that all riders wear helmets when operating a bicycle.*
- Section 3511: Bicycles are prohibited on freeways without prior written permission by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. If permission is granted, bicycle use would be restricted to road shoulders whenever practicable. *Anyone seeking permission to bike on a freeway must write a request to the Department of Transportation indicating the lack of reasonable alternative routes. Requests can only be made by bicycle operators 18 years old or older, or 16 years of age or older if accompanied by another bicyclist 18 or older.*