

Bicycle



Traffic Safety Course



Five Rules for safe use of bicycle

- 1 In principle, cyclists must ride on roadways and ride on the left ; only in exceptional cases may sidewalks be used, and give pedestrians the right of way
- 2 At intersections, Obey traffic signals and must come to a stop and check safety
- 3 Use bicycle lights at night
- 4 Prohibited from riding under the influence of alcohol
- 5 Wear a bicycle helmet



Five Rules for safe use of bicycle

(Headquarters of Traffic Safety Measures, The National Council for Traffic Safety Measures decision on November 1, 2022)

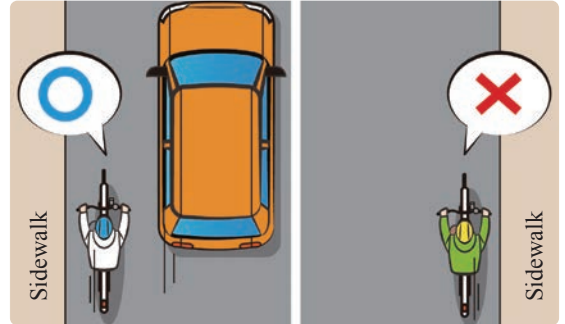
A bicycle is classified as a “Light road vehicle.” Hence, it falls under the purview of Road Traffic Act. Therefore, there are traffic rules that must be followed by bicycle riders.

Fine **Criminal Penalties** “Traffic infraction notification procedure” on page 3 for more information on fines and criminal penalties.

1 In principle, cyclists must ride on roadways and ride on the left ; only in exceptional cases may sidewalks be used, and give pedestrians the right of way

- In principle, cyclists must ride on the roadway when there is a distinction between sidewalks and roadways.
- They must ride on the left side of the road.

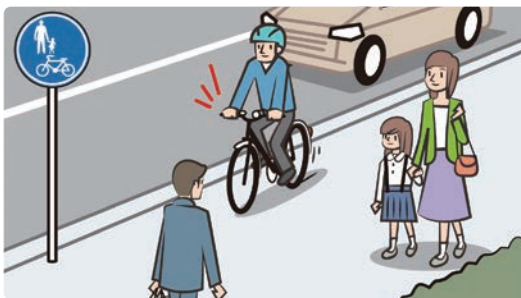
*Riding on the right side of the road (riding the wrong way) is very dangerous because it is difficult to be seen by oncoming traffic in areas with parked cars or curves, and there is a risk of a head-on collision.



Fine **Criminal Penalties**
 Traffic distribution violation (passing on the right side of the road) **6,000 yen** Up to 3 months imprisonment or a fine of up to 50,000 yen, etc.

- When standard bicycles (see below) are able to ride on the sidewalk, they must ride slowly (at a speed that allows them to stop immediately) on the portion of the sidewalk closest to the roadway from the center of the sidewalk.
- Cyclists must stop temporarily when obstructing pedestrian traffic.

*Riding close to the roadway allows keeping a safe distance from vehicles coming out of off-street facilities and intersecting roads, being noticed by vehicles earlier to prevent traffic accidents, and preventing contact with pedestrians coming out of off-street buildings and other structures.



Fine **Criminal Penalties**
 Violation of the obligation to ride slowly on sidewalks **3,000 yen** Fine or penalty of up to 20,000 yen

When standard bicycles are exceptionally allowed to ride on the sidewalk

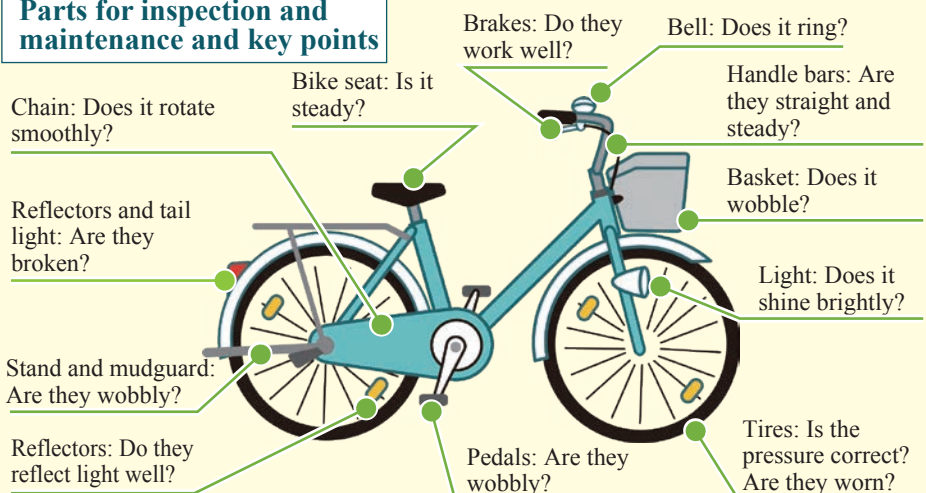
- There are signs indicating that “standard bicycles are permitted on the sidewalk” 
- Children (under 13 years of age), elderly (70 years and older), and individuals with disabilities are riding
- Unavoidable to ensure safe riding.
 - Road under construction
 - Cars are parked along the road
 - Traffic is heavy and the road is narrow

What is a standard bicycle?

A standard bicycle refers to a bicycle that meets the following criteria and that is not towing another vehicle.

- Has less than four wheels
- Does not exceed 190 cm in length and 60 cm in width
- Does not have a sidecar attached (except training wheels)
- There are no passenger devices other than the rider’s seat (except infant seats)
- Brakes are located in an easy-to-operate position
- Nothing sharp is sticking out

Parts for inspection and maintenance and key points





2 At intersections, Obey traffic signals and must come to a stop and check safety

- At intersections with traffic signals, follow the signals and make sure to check for safety before crossing.
- As a general rule, bicycles must obey the signals for oncoming traffic. When there is a traffic signal marked “pedestrians and bicycles only” or when passing through a pedestrian crossing, cyclists must obey the pedestrian signal.



Fine	Criminal Penalties
Ignoring a traffic light 6,000 yen	Up to 3 months of imprisonment or a fine of up to 50,000 yen



- Whenever road signs indicate to stop, be sure to stop and check for safety.

Fine	Criminal Penalties
Failure to stop in designated places 5,000 yen	Up to 3 months of imprisonment or a fine of up to 50,000 yen

3 Use bicycle lights at night

- Bicycle lights must always be turned on at night.
- It is important not only for lighting your way ahead, but also to let people around you be aware of your presence.

Fine	Criminal Penalties
No lights 5,000 yen	Fine of up to 50,000 yen



4 Prohibited from riding under the influence of alcohol

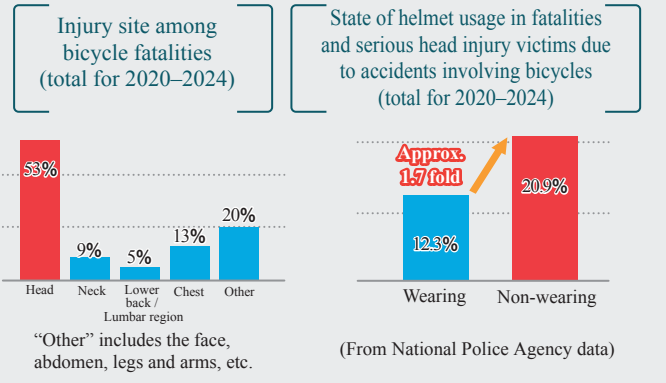
- Never ride after drinking alcohol.
- Riding under the influence of alcohol is subject to criminal penalties.
- In addition to criminal penalties, cyclists may also be subject to an administrative penalty on their driver’s license.



Criminal penalty	
1. Driver and bicycle provider	
Drunk-riding	Up to 5 years of imprisonment or a fine of up to 1,000,000 yen
Riding under the influence of alcohol	Up to 3 years of imprisonment or a fine of up to 500,000 yen
2. Alcohol supplier/passengers	
Drunk-riding	Up to 3 years of imprisonment or a fine of up to 500,000 yen
Riding under the influence of alcohol	Up to 2 years of imprisonment or a fine of up to 300,000 yen

5 Wear a bicycle helmet

- All bicycle riders should wear a riding helmet to reduce the damage caused by bicycle accidents.
- Individuals responsible for the protection of infants and children should ensure that they wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.

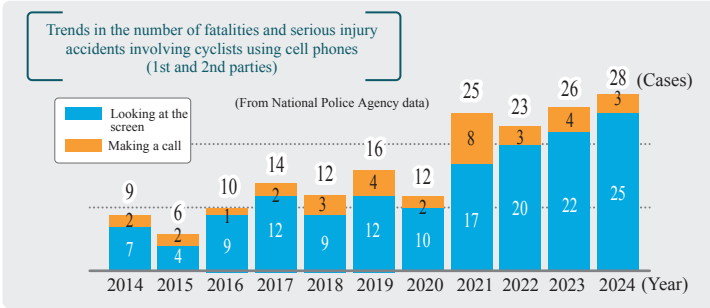


In bicycle traffic accidents, approximately 50% of fatalities are caused by head injuries. In addition, among fatalities and serious injuries, which are mainly caused by head injuries, the rate of those not wearing a helmet is approximately 1.7 times higher than those wearing a helmet.

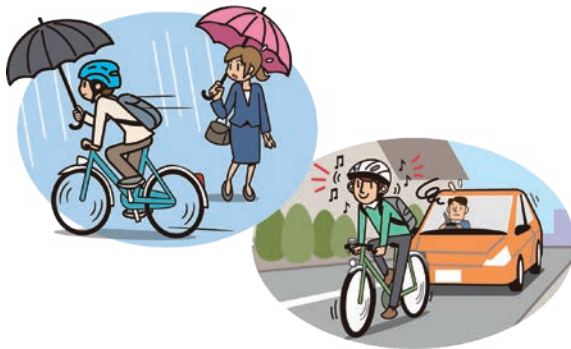


Never use your smart phone while riding a bicycle

Bicycle accidents while using a cell phone are on the rise. In addition to making a call while holding your phone or looking at the screen while riding, it is a violation to attach your phone to your bicycle to look at a map or other information displayed on the screen.



Fine	Criminal penalty
Cell phone use, etc. (holding) 12,000 yen	Up to 6 months of imprisonment or a fine of up to 100,000 yen *In the event of being a danger on the road, imprisonment for up to one year or a fine of up to 300,000 yen



Riding with an umbrella or earphones is also dangerous

Riding while holding an umbrella or wearing earphones or other devices that prevent you from hearing the surrounding sounds is prohibited in all prefectures.

Fine	Criminal penalty
Violation of Public Safety Commission Compliance 5,000 yen	Fine of up to 50,000 yen

Traffic infraction notification procedure (blue ticket system)

In recent years, the situation of traffic accidents involving bicycles has become more severe, and in many cases, cyclists are found to be in violation of laws and regulations as the cause of such accidents. In order to ensure that bicycles, as vehicles, comply with road rules, a traffic infraction notification procedure* (known as a blue ticket) has been introduced for certain bicycle traffic violations committed by people aged 16 and above.

*Under this procedure, individuals aged 16 years and above who commit a violation are notified to pay a set fine upon arrest, and if they voluntarily pay the fine, the case is not transferred to criminal proceedings (not prosecuted).



Malicious or dangerous riding behavior that may cause traffic accidents

Red ticket (criminal citation)

Serious traffic violations or traffic accidents

- Drunk riding and riding under the influence of alcohol
- Causing a traffic accident due to the violation

Example

Application of red tickets—criminal procedures (Criminal penalties)

Blue ticket (traffic violation notice)

Violations by persons 16 years of age or older

- Holding a smart phone and looking at the screen or talking on the phone.
- Ignoring a traffic light, entering an intersection, and causing another vehicle to brake suddenly

Example

Application of blue tickets—traffic infraction notification procedure (Fines)

The basic approach to traffic violation guidance and enforcement remains unchanged. Basically, guidance and warnings are given for bicycle traffic violations, and malicious or dangerous violations that may cause traffic accidents are subject to arrest.



Bicycle Rider Training System

Bicycle riders (aged 14 years and above) who have repeated dangerous violations (16 types) two or more times within three years must attend the “Bicycle Rider Training” by order of the Prefectural Public Safety Commission.



16 types of dangerous conduct (violations) subject to bicycle rider training

1 Ignoring a traffic light

2 Violation against no bicycle signs

Riding on a road where bicycle traffic is prohibited by a road sign, etc.



3 Violation of Vehicle Obligations on Pedestrian pathways (Slow Traffic Violation)

Failure to pay attention to pedestrians and slow down on pedestrian pathways where bicycles are allowed to pass.

4 Traffic distribution violation

Passing on the right side of the roadway, or passing on an impassable sidewalk.



5 Obstruction of pedestrians when passing on the roadside strip

Riding along the roadside strip at a speed and in a manner that obstructs pedestrian traffic.



6 Entering a blocked railway crossing

7 Violation to comply with the obligation to proceed safely at intersections

Violation to comply with the obligation to proceed safely at intersections and other acts, such as obstructing vehicles forcing right of way at intersections.



8 Obstructing priority vehicles at intersections

When turning right at an intersection, obstructing the progress of a vehicle going straight or turning left.

9 Violation to comply with the obligation to proceed safely at a roundabout

Obstructing the progress of a vehicle passing through a roundabout, or failing to slow down when entering a roundabout.



10 Failure to stop in designated places

11 Violation of the way of passage when riding on the sidewalk

Obstructing pedestrians (failure to stop) on a sidewalk where passage is permitted.



12 Riding with a poor braking system (brakes)

Riding a bicycle that has no brakes on the front or rear wheels or has poor braking performance.

13 Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol, etc.

14 Violation of safe driving duty

Riding at a speed or in a manner that may cause harm to others, without operating the handle bars and brakes properly.



15 Riding while using a cell phone, etc. (riding while using a smart phone)

16 Obstructive riding (reckless riding)

Dangerous riding such as riding the wrong way, braking suddenly, or changing course suddenly for the purpose of obstructing other vehicles.





If you have an accident on your bicycle.

In the event of a bicycle accident, the rider has a duty to provide first aid to the injured party and to report the accident to the police. If you have an accident while riding your bicycle, stay calm and follow the procedures on the right.

*If necessary, call for an automated external defibrillator (AED) or emergency medical services.

*Failure to take these measures and leaving the scene can result in severe penalties for “hit-and-run”.

- 1 Immediately stop riding
- 2 Provide first aid to the injured
- 3 Remove dangers on the road
- 4 Notify the police



Liability is held when you are at fault of an accident.

Bicycles, like automobiles, are subject to “criminal liability” when they violate road rules and cause accidents. If you cause injury or death to another person, charges of negligence or gross negligence causing death may apply. It may also result in civil liability for damages. There is an increasing number of cases seeking payment of large amounts of compensation. Make every effort to ride safely.



Examples of being at fault of a bicycle accident

Survey conducted by the General Insurance Association of Japan

Amount awarded (*)

95.21
million yen

Accident Summary

An 11-year-old elementary schooler boy was riding his bicycle at night on his way home when he collided head-on with a 62-year-old woman walking on a road where there is no distinction between the sidewalk and road. The woman suffered various injuries, including a skull fracture, and was rendered unconscious. (Kobe District Court, Decision of July 4, 2013)

(*) The amount awarded is the (estimated) amount that the party at fault was ordered to pay in the written court decision. The amount may differ from the amount actually paid by the party at fault due to post-trial appeals, etc.

Prepare for the risk of accidents, such as with bicycle insurance

More and more prefectures are requiring, by ordinance, the purchase of “bicycle liability insurance” (bicycle insurance) and other insurance to cover bicycle accidents. Be sure to take out bicycle insurance in case of an accident.

Insurance against bicycle accidents

Liability for damages caused by bicycle accidents is covered by “personal liability insurance” and your own injuries are covered by “personal accident insurance”.

- The insurance is sold under names such as “bicycle insurance” combining both personal liability and accident insurance.
- In addition, some insurance contracts include the following:
 - 1 Special provisions for automobile insurance, fire insurance, personal accident insurance, etc.
 - 2 Supplementary insurance for credit cards, etc.
 - 3 Mutual aid or group insurance (company, PTA insurance, etc.)
 In some cases, contracts are made based on these terms. Check your insurance coverage.



Type of Insurance	Party covered		Self
	The other person in the accident	Life & Body	Property and objects
Personal liability insurance	○	○	×
Accident insurance	×	×	○