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KANSAS LAWS APPLICABLE TO BICYCLE OPERATION

This memorandum summarizes State of Kansas traffic laws applicable to bicycle operation on roadways. Local ordinances also may apply and may address additional topics.¹

General Traffic Laws

All the rights and duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle apply to a cyclist.ⁱ The following are examples:

- Obey traffic control devices unless otherwise directed by a law enforcement officerⁱⁱ;
- Yield the right-of-way as indicated to other vehicles and pedestrians.ⁱⁱⁱ Exercise due care to avoid colliding with any pedestrian.^{iv} A pedestrian has the right-of-way on any sidewalk^v;
- Stop before crossing a sidewalk when emerging from an alley, building, private road, or driveway^{vi};
- Speed must be reasonable and prudent for actual conditions. Obey speed limits^{vii}; and
- Signal turns.^{viii}

Traffic Laws Specific to Bicycles

Keep right. A cyclist riding at less than the normal speed of traffic must ride as near to the right side of the roadway as is practicable and reasonably necessary to avoid obstacles and surface hazards, with these exceptions:

- Overtaking and passing another bicycle or vehicle going the same direction;
- Preparing for a left turn; or
- When riding on a one-way highway with two or more marked lanes, the cyclist may go as close to the left side of the roadway as practicable.^{ix}

¹ For example, Kansas state laws regarding operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs do not apply to operation of a bicycle, but the Code of Ordinances City of Wichita Sec. 11.48.190 makes such operation unlawful. Another example of an exception is the Code of the City of Lawrence Section 17-702, which prohibits riding a bicycle on downtown sidewalks, and Section 17-703 prohibits locking a bicycle to a tree, fire hydrant, traffic control device or sign, street light, utility pole, or parking meter post serving a space designed for parking by persons with disability.

Passing. A driver may pass to the left a bicycle going the same direction at a distance of not less than three feet to the left and may pass a bicycle in a no-passing zone only if it is safe to do so.^x

Two abreast. Cyclists shall not ride more than two abreast except on exclusive bike paths or within exclusive lanes.^{xi}

Use the path. Whenever a usable path for bicycles is adjacent to a roadway, cyclists must use the path and not the roadway.^{xii}

Keep hands on handlebars. Clinging to any vehicle is prohibited.^{xiii} No cyclist shall carry anything that prevents the cyclist from keeping at least one hand on the handlebars.^{xiv}

Red light exception. If a traffic signal fails to change to a green light within a reasonable period of time because of a signal malfunction or because the signal has failed to detect the bicycle, the cyclist may proceed but must yield the right-of-way to a motor vehicle or pedestrian.^{xv}

Required Equipment

Lights. Every bicycle ridden between sunset and sunrise must be equipped with a white-light lamp on the front visible from at least 500 feet. It also must have a red reflector on the rear visible with low beams from 100 feet to 600 feet or a lamp on the rear emitting red light visible from 500 feet to the rear, or the cyclist must wear a device that emits a red or amber light visible from 500 feet to the rear. Pedals must have reflectors visible from the front and rear from 200 feet.^{xvi}

Brakes. Brakes must allow the operator to make the braked wheels skid on dry, level, clean pavement.^{xvii}

Seats. Each person propelling a bicycle must ride on or astride a permanent and regular attached seat.^{xviii} No bicycle may carry more people than the number for which it is designed and equipped.^{xix}

i Kansas Statutes Annotated (KSA) 8-1587. All statutes are available through www.ksrevisor.org.

ii KSA 8-1507, 8-1508.

iii KSA 8-1528, 8-1529, 8-1530, 8-1531, 8-1533, 8-1542.

iv KSA 8-1535.

v KSA 8-1540.

vi KSA 8-1555.

vii KSA 8-1557, KSA 2016 Supp. 8-1558.

viii KSA 8-1548, 8-1550.

ix KSA 8-1590(a), (b).

x KSA 2016 Supp. 8-1516.

xi KSA 8-1590(c).

xii KSA 8-1590(d). Similarly, pedestrians must use provided sidewalks (KSA 8-1537(a)).

xiii KSA 8-8-1589. This applies also to coasters, roller skates, sleds, and toy vehicles.

xiv KSA 8-1591.

xv KSA 2016 Supp. 8-1508(c)(4). This provision also applies to motorcycles.

xvi KSA 2017 Supp. 8-1592(a) and (c). Law regarding visibility from the rear was amended by 2017 HB 2170. Until July 1, 2017, the bicycle must have a red reflector visible from 100 feet to 600 feet to the rear, and a lamp on the rear emitting red light visible from 500 feet to the rear may be used in addition to the red reflector.

xvii KSA 8-1592(b).

xviii KSA 8-1588(a).

xix KSA 8-1588(b).