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Rules of the road for bicyclists

Last in a summer series of bike safety columns:

When you are riding your bicycle you are considered a vehicle, just like a car. Therefore you should operate your bicycle as you would drive a car. Ride on the right with the flow of traffic. Riding against traffic puts you at risk with vehicles entering the street from a stop sign or driveway in addition to crossing at intersections. The other drivers will not be looking for a break in oncoming traffic from the direction you are traveling.

Make sure you stop for all stop signs, yellow caution or red lights, pedestrians and vehicles that have the right-of-way. Remember, cars only have to stop for you if you are walking your bicycle across a street at a designated crosswalk.

If you ride your bike across a street you are a vehicle and must follow the right-of-way rules. If you walk your bike you are a pedestrian and in a marked crosswalk, you have the right-of-way. However, remember to always be defensive, not offensive.

When crossing a road at a light, the same holds true. If you are crossing with the "walk sign" you are to walk your bicycle across the intersection. If you are riding your bike across the road, ride with the traffic making sure to stay to the right.

Once again, a reminder that it is the law in Massachusetts that all bicycle drivers ages 16 and under wear helmets.

Additional information on this subject matter can be found on the Mass Bike Web site www.massbike.org.

This column was submitted by the Orleans Bike and Walkways Committee.