

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- OPERATION OF BICYCLES--
HIGHWAY SAFETY ACT

Introduced By: Senators Kallman, Gu, McKenney, DiMario, Valverde, Zurier, and
Ujifusa

Date Introduced: February 16, 2023

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 31-19-14 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-19 entitled "Operation
2 of Bicycles" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **31-19-14. Turn and stop signals.**

4 (a) Except as provided in this section, a person riding a bicycle shall comply with § 31-16-
5 5.

6 (b) A signal of intention to turn right or left when required shall be given continuously
7 during not less than the last one hundred feet (100') traveled by the bicycle before turning, and shall
8 be given while the bicycle is stopped waiting to turn. A signal by hand and arm need not be given
9 continuously if the hand is needed in control or operation of the bicycle.

10 (c) A person operating a bicycle approaching a stop sign shall slow down and, if required
11 for safety, stop before entering the intersection. After slowing to a reasonable speed or stopping,
12 the person shall yield the right-of-way to any vehicle in the intersection or approaching on another
13 highway so closely as to constitute an immediate hazard during the time the person is moving across
14 or within the intersection or junction of highways. After slowing to a reasonable speed and yielding
15 the right-of-way, if required, the person on a bicycle may cautiously make a turn or proceed through
16 the intersection without stopping.

17 (d) A person operating a bicycle approaching a steady red traffic control light shall stop
18 before entering the intersection and shall yield to all other traffic. Once the person has yielded, the

1 person may proceed straight through the steady red light with caution. Provided however, that a
2 person, after slowing to a reasonable speed and yielding the right-of-way, if required, may
3 cautiously make a right-hand turn. A left-hand turn onto a one-way highway may be made on a red
4 light after stopping and yielding to other traffic.

5 (e) A person riding a bicycle shall comply with the following:

6 (1) Both the approach for a right turn and the right turn shall be made as close as practicable
7 to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway.

8 (2) When intending to turn left, the person on a bicycle shall approach the turn in the
9 extreme left-hand lane lawfully available to traffic moving in the direction of travel. Whenever
10 practicable, the left turn shall be made to the left of the center of the intersection in order to leave
11 the intersection or other location in the extreme left-hand lane lawfully available to traffic moving
12 in the same direction on the highway being entered.

13 (3) Where a special lane for making left turns by drivers proceeding in opposite directions
14 has been indicated by traffic-control devices:

15 (i) A left turn shall not be made from any other lane;

16 (ii) A person operating a bicycle shall not ride in the lane, except when preparing for or
17 making a left turn from or into the highway or when preparing for or making a U-turn when
18 otherwise permitted by law.

19 (f) A signal of intention to turn right or left shall be given during not less than the last one
20 hundred feet (100') traveled by the bicycle before turning; provided that, a signal by hand and arm
21 need not be given if the hand is needed in the control or operation of the bicycle.

22 (g) Nothing in this section shall relieve a person on a bicycle from the responsibility to
23 yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian.

24 SECTION 2. Chapter 31-17 of the General Laws entitled "Right-of-Way" is hereby
25 amended by adding thereto the following section:

26 **31-17-10. Yielding to person on a bicycle at crossings and intersections.**

27 (a) No driver of a motor vehicle shall pass any other motor vehicle which has stopped at a
28 bicycle crossing to permit a person on a bicycle to cross, nor shall any such operator enter a marked
29 bicycle crossing while a person on a bicycle is crossing or until there is a sufficient space beyond
30 the bicycle crossing to accommodate the motor vehicle the person is operating, notwithstanding
31 that a traffic control signal may indicate that vehicles may proceed.

32 (b) When traffic control signals are not in place or not in operation, the driver of a motor
33 vehicle shall yield the right-of-way, slowing down or stopping if need be, to yield to a person on a
34 bicycle crossing a roadway or intersection at a bicycle crossing marked, signed, or otherwise

1 designated in accordance with standards established by the department including, but not limited
2 to, road crossings of bicycle or shared-use paths and intersection crossings of bicycle lanes, if the
3 person on a bicycle is on that half of the traveled part of the way on which the vehicle is traveling
4 or if the person on a bicycle approaches from the opposite half of the traveled part of the way to
5 within ten feet (10') of that half of the traveled part of the way on which said vehicle is traveling.

6 (c) Any driver of a vehicle convicted of violating the provisions of this section shall be
7 subject to the fines enumerated in § 31-41.1-4 in the same amount for the violations of § 31-17-9.

8 SECTION 3. Chapter 31-14 of the General Laws entitled "Speed Restrictions" is hereby
9 amended by adding thereto the following section:

10 **31-14-14. Speed limits in thickly settled areas and business districts.**

11 (a) On a state highway inside a thickly settled or business district located in a city or town,
12 the department shall establish and post a speed limit of twenty-five miles per hour (25 mph) or a
13 speed limit based on an engineering speed study in compliance with chapter 13 of title 31 the
14 ("manual on uniform traffic control devices").

15 (b) On a parkway inside a thickly settled or business district located in a city or town, the
16 local authority with jurisdiction shall establish and post a speed limit of twenty-five miles per hour
17 (25 mph) or a speed limit based on an engineering speed study in compliance with chapter 13 of
18 title 31 the ("manual on uniform traffic control devices").

19 (c) For the purposes of this section, "thickly settled" shall be defined as any area where
20 buildings are fewer than two hundred feet (200') apart for a distance of one-eighth (1/8) of a mile
21 or more.

22 (d) Violations of this section are subject to fines enumerated in § 31-41.1-4 in the same
23 amount for the violations of § 31-14-1.

24 SECTION 4. Chapter 31-27.1 of the General Laws entitled "Aggressive Driving" is hereby
25 amended by adding thereto the following section:

26 **31-27.1-5. Reckless driver accountability traffic safety program.**

27 (a) There is hereby established a reckless driver accountability traffic safety program.

28 (b) The program shall feature classes, based on a restorative justice model, to educate
29 reckless drivers on the impacts of their actions. The program shall be open to the public. The state
30 may charge reasonable fees to pay for the administration of the reckless driver accountability
31 program.

32 (c) Motor vehicles with five (5) or more automated traffic enforcement (ATE) or speeding
33 violations, or three (3) or more speeding violations for driving twenty-one miles per hour (21 mph)
34 or more over the speed limit, within a three hundred, sixty-five (365) day period shall be subject to

1 impoundment, unless the vehicle's owner enrolls in the reckless driver accountability program
2 within ten (10) days after notification of the last violation and completes the class within ninety
3 (90) days after the notification of the last violation. Any vehicle impounded pursuant to this section
4 shall not be released until the vehicle's owner completes the reckless driver accountability program
5 and pays all applicable towing and storage fees.

6 (d) The state shall notify, through certified mail, owners of motor vehicles with four (4)
7 violations, or two (2) speeding violations for driving twenty-one miles per hour (21 mph) or more
8 over the speed limit, that their vehicle will be subject to impoundment following another violation,
9 unless the owner voluntarily enrolls in the reckless driver accountability program within thirty (30)
10 days after receiving the notification of the last violation and completes the class within one hundred
11 twenty (120) days after the notification of the last violation.

12 (e) Following completion of the reckless driver accountability program, motor vehicles
13 shall again be subject to impoundment by the state after receiving another five (5) ATE or speeding
14 tickets, or another three (3) speeding violations for driving twenty-one miles per hour (21 mph) or
15 more over the speed limit.

16 SECTION 5. Chapter 16-21 of the General Laws entitled "Health and Safety of Pupils" is
17 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

18 **16-21-17.1. Curriculum for highway safety.**

19 (a) The department of elementary and secondary education shall develop and make
20 available to public schools and public charter schools in Rhode Island an educational curriculum
21 for children in kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) regarding the safe use of public streets
22 and premises open to the public by pedestrians and bicyclists.

23 (b) At a minimum, the curriculum shall address:

24 (1) The safe use of bicycles;

25 (2) Traffic laws, regulations and best practices including, but not limited to, the use of the
26 far hand reach when exiting a motor vehicle known as Dutch Reach;

27 (3) The use of bicycle lanes and trails; and

28 (4) Safe pedestrian practices.

29 SECTION 6. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2024.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- OPERATION OF BICYCLES--
HIGHWAY SAFETY ACT

1 This act would amend several chapters of the general laws regarding the operation of
2 bicycles on state highways and interaction with motor vehicles, reckless driver accountability
3 program and speed limits in thickly settled areas and business districts.

4 This act would take effect on January 1, 2024.

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