Traffic Law: A Bike’s-Eye View

Lifesavers 2020

Law Enforcement & Education: Partnering to Address Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety

Les Leathem
League of American Bicyclists
les@theseguysbike.com
The Issues

- Who are the road users?
- What laws are in place to support them?
- What are their rights...and duties?
- What type of enforcement is appropriate?
Traffic

“Pedestrians, ridden or herded animals, vehicles, and other conveyances either singly or together while using any highway for purposes of travel”
Do LEOs Know Bike Law?

- Pre-test
  - Traffic law from the bicyclist’s point-of-view
  - 20 questions
- Average score (100 points possible)?
Do LEOs Know Bike Law?

- Pre-test
  - Traffic law from the bicyclist’s point-of-view
  - 20 questions

- Average pretest score: 58%
  - No difference between patrol & bike patrol
    (300+ responses, 5 years experience)
What’s it mean?
What’s it mean?

- Share the road
- May use full lane
- Change lanes to pass
What does it mean?
In The Classroom
The E’s

- Enforcement
- Engineering
- Education
- Encouragement
- Evaluation
- Equity
Pedestrian Accommodations: Pinchpoint

- Shortens crossing distance
- Visual slows motor traffic

- Takes parking spaces

©2015-2020, These Guys, LLC
 Increases visibility of bicyclists
 Creates safe left-turn space

“Stale red” could lead to fatal result...
Key Difference?

- Ped accommodations
  - Don’t have to “think”

- Bike accommodations
  - Don’t understand
  - Not taught meaning
Cyclists Are Scofflaws!
“Far Right” Statutes

- Most states use the same language: Bicyclists must stay “as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable”

- Some states specify exceptions to this; some do not

- Some say as far right as is SAFE

- Some have no such rule
Where is Left-Turning Motorist Looking?

Where should this bicyclist be to maximize visibility to that motorist?
What Are the Key Violations?
Key Violations: Motorists

- Failure to yield
  - When entering roadway
  - At stop/yield sign
  - When turning left
- Unsafe passing (& “right hook”)
- Driving too fast for conditions
- Opening a car door into traffic
- Not yielding to pedestrians
Key Violations: Cyclists

- Wrong-way riding
- Failure to yield
  - When entering roadway
  - At stop/yield sign
  - When turning left
- Failure to obey traffic signals
- Riding at night without required equipment
- Riding on sidewalk where prohibited
Key Violations: Pedestrians

- Crossing outside crosswalk (illegal in some jurisdictions)
- Not using sidewalks (illegal in some jurisdictions)
- Walking with traffic
- Not obeying traffic signals
What you don’t enforce, you endorse!
On The Bike
What happens differently tomorrow?

Look at roads differently
► Why are they designed the way they are?
► Why are they striped that way?
► How does that impact driver behavior?

Think about enforcement
► How can I enforce/educate?
► Am I encouraging good...or bad... behavior?
Post-Test Results

- Scores improve significantly
- Increases of 10-25 percentage points
  - THEY GET IT!
- Greatest impact? On-bike modules
One-Year Followup

- Survey one year post-participation
- 24% of participants (11 of 45) responded
- Good distribution from class locations
- All respondents ride bikes

- 36% More than before
- 64% Same as before
Officers More Familiar With “Bike Law”

Familiarity

- Very familiar: 64%
- Somewhat familiar: 36%
- Somewhat unfamiliar: 0%
- Very unfamiliar: 0%

Δ in familiarity

- Greater since course: 73%
- No change: 27%
- Less since course: 0%
No Change In Citations…

Motorists

- More: 9%
- Same: 18%
- Fewer: 9%
- Never: 64%

Bicyclists

- More: 9%
- Same: 36%
- Fewer: 9%
- Never: 46%
NEARLY ALL those surveyed used course information to educate or issue warnings rather than issuing a citation...
THANK YOU!

Les Leathem
These Guys, LLC
les@theseguysbike.com
609-578-0625
Please evaluate this presentation using the Lifesavers Conference Mobile App.

1. Select Sessions Icon
2. Select Applicable Track
3. Select Applicable Workshop
4. Click Rate Session Button (or) Clipboard Icon