



CONCRETE  
MANITOBA

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**Defensive Driving for  
Cyclists: A Guide to  
Safety on the Road**

# Defensive Cycling Best Practices

Cycling defensively is the best way to avoid being involved in an on-road incident. A defensive cyclist is one who can anticipate the actions of motor vehicle operators, make quick, calculated decisions to avoid conflict, and actively works to gain better information from their operating environment to allow themselves more time and space to make safe decisions.

***The defensive cyclist is always more concerned with being safe than being right, and will give away their right-of-way to avoid an incident.***

There are many cycling safety courses available, and each has its own unique approach to the topic. The most important thing to remember is that cycling defensively is a skill set that must be practiced and applied on an ongoing basis, regardless of your experience level or the type of bicycle you ride.

Many motor vehicle operators are not fully aware of the challenges cyclists face when sharing roadways, particularly with heavy commercial vehicles such as Ready-Mix trucks. Some motorists assume that cyclists can quickly maneuver out of the way or that truck drivers sitting up high can see everything clearly. We all know this is not the case. Cyclists are vulnerable road users who lack the protection of a vehicle cabin, can be difficult to see in a truck's blind spots, and must navigate infrastructure designed primarily for motor vehicles.

Understanding cycling infrastructure, including bike lanes, bike boxes, and hand signals is essential for your safety as a cyclist. This knowledge helps you understand where you should position yourself on the road, how to communicate your intentions to motorists, and what to expect from different types of cycling facilities. When cyclists understand and properly use cycling infrastructure, they can make better decisions and create safer interactions with all road users.

This document is designed by Concrete Manitoba to provide essential knowledge about cycling awareness and road-sharing techniques to enhance safety for cyclists sharing the road with Ready-Mix trucks and other commercial vehicles. By understanding cycling infrastructure, using proper hand signals, and practicing defensive cycling principles, you can significantly reduce the risk of incidents and contribute to safer roads for everyone in our communities.

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## CYCLING AWARENESS

Driving defensively is incredibly important. The defensive driver works to constantly gain more and better information. Having a basic understanding of the various cycling infrastructure elements we may encounter on-road will have a significance on the meaning and quality of the information we are processing.

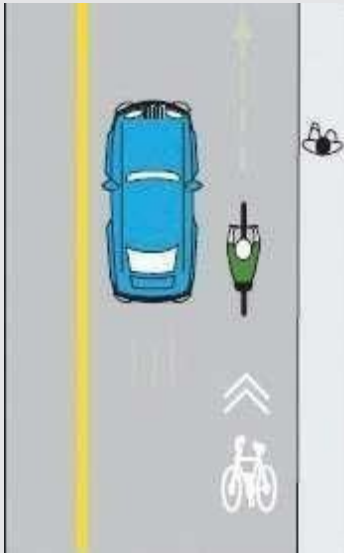
### Hand Signals

Some bicycles and e-bikes are equipped with lights and turn signals which motor vehicle operators can easily identify and understand, however, to ensure effective communication, the basic hand signals must be understood.



### Sharrows

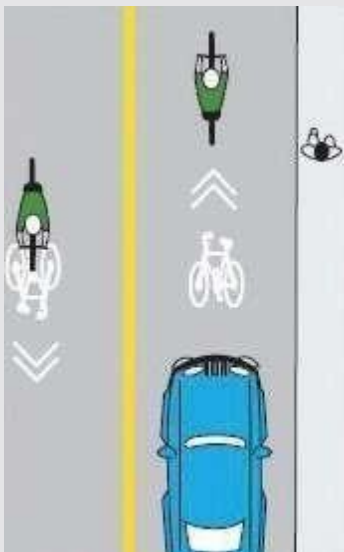
“Sharrows” pavement markings highlight the best positions for cyclists on a given roadway. Unlike a dedicated bike lane, ALL vehicles can operate here which includes the ability to stop or park in those zones.



### Side -By-Side Sharrow

When a street is wide, the sharrow markings tend to be positioned on the right side of the active traffic lane near the curb giving cyclists some dedicated space of their own to operate.

These indicate the best position for cyclists on a roadway. It is important to remember to share the road with vehicles and maintain space around your bicycle.



### Full Lane Sharrow

When a street is narrow, the sharrow markings tend to be positioned in the middle of the active traffic lane.

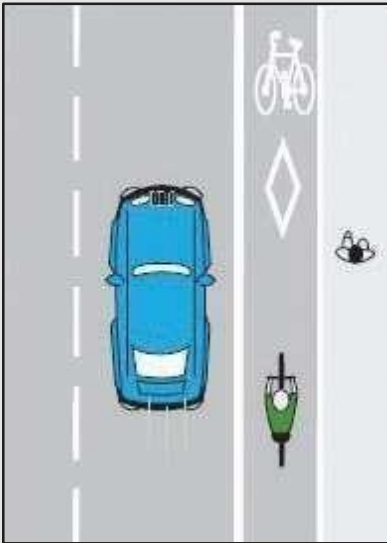
This marking directs all vehicles and bicycles to travel in a single file.

## Bike Lanes

Bike lanes are your dedicated space on the roadway and are legally treated as separate lanes of traffic. When you see a diamond marking inside a lane, it designates it as a 'reserved lane' just for you.

Motorists are strictly prohibited from blocking these lanes, even for a moment (with exceptions only for emergency vehicles, public transit, and utility service vehicles).

You will encounter two main types of bike lanes on the road. Understanding how they differ will help you navigate traffic confidently and ensure safer interactions with vehicles.

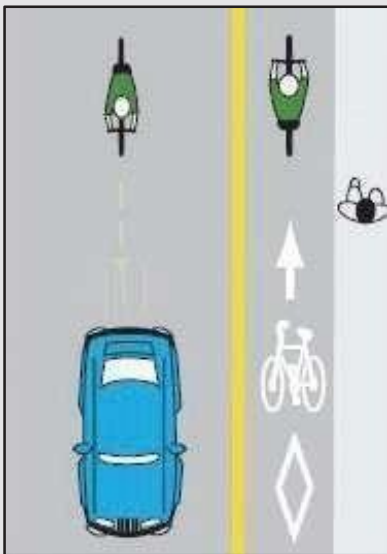


### Traditional Bike Lane

A traditional bike lane is positioned on the right side of the road and has a solid white line along the left side with diamond and bike markings to clearly illustrate that it is dedicated to bicycle traffic.

These lanes are designed for cyclists to travel in the same direction as traffic.

When the solid white line on the left side of the lane is dashed, it means that motor vehicles may merge into this lane to make a right-hand turn.



### Contra-Flow Bike Lane

A contra-flow bike lane is similar to a traditional bike lane in that it is positioned on the right side of the road, but it has a solid yellow line along the left side with diamond and bike markings to clearly illustrate that it is dedicated for bicycle traffic.

These lanes are designed for cyclists to travel in the opposite direction as traffic.



Bike boxes are a new kind of street marking to help motorists and cyclists share the road. Bike boxes are used at intersections to designate a space for cyclists to wait in front of cars at a red light and then proceed first through the intersection when the light turns green. Once they clear the intersection they resume travelling in the bike lane.

At red lights, the motor vehicle drivers must stop at the stop line behind the bike box.



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