Utah Bicycle Laws

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Bicycle Accident Attorney Jackie Carmichael explains the bike laws in Utah.

By Jackie Carmichael, Bike Law Utah

Utah has 16 bicycle safety laws that are codified at Utah Code Section 41-6a-10 et seq.

First and foremost, cyclists need to understand that their bicycles are considered "vehicles" under the law and cyclists are subject to the same laws as an operator of any other vehicle. Specifically, cyclists are required to obey all traffic signals (41-6a-305), stop and yield signs (41-6a-902), and all other official traffic control devices (41-6a-208). Utah's bicycle safety laws require cyclists to ride in the same direction as traffic (41-6a-1105) and maintain brakes that can stop you within 25 feet from a speed of 10 miles per hour (41-6a-1113). If you are going to ride your bicycle earlier than a half hour before sunrise, later than a half hour after sunset, or in any other conditions where visibility is difficult, cyclists are required to have a white headlight, red taillight or reflector and side reflectors that are visible for at least 500 feet (41-61-1114).

One of the most important safety laws prohibits the operation of a motor vehicle near a bicycle (41-61-706.5). Specifically, the law states that an operator of a motor vehicle MAY NOT operate a motor vehicle within three feet of a moving bicycle. Similarly, Utah's bicycle safety laws require motorists, as well as cyclists, to give a signal of an intention to turn right or left or change lanes for at least two seconds preceding the beginning of the movement (41-6a-804). Further, a person operating a bicycle or motor vehicle may not stop suddenly or suddenly decrease speed without first giving an appropriate signal to the operator of any bicycle or motor vehicle to the rear (41-61-804). The bicycle safety laws spell out the various hand and arm signals that should be used to indicate change in direction and/or speed and prohibits the "flashing" of a signal, instead, requiring that the signal be given at least 2 seconds prior to the movement.

Cyclists may ride no more than two abreast and only if it does not impede traffic (41-6a-1105). Cyclists must also ride as far to the right as possible except when passing, preparing to turn left, traveling in a narrow lane, avoiding unsafe conditions on the right hand edge of the roadway or going through an intersection past a right turn only lane. (41-6a-1105). Cyclists may NOT have a siren or a whistle on their bikes. (41-6a-1113). Cyclists, just like motorists, are required to yield to pedestrians and are further required to

use care and safe speeds to avoid collisions (41-6a-1106). Cyclists may not carry anything that prevents using both hands to control their bike and the law requires cyclists to keep one hand on the handlebars at all times (41-6a-1112). Finally, it is important to know that under Utah's bicycle safety laws, peace officers have the right to require cyclists to stop and submit their bicycles to an inspection if the officer has reasonable cause to believe that the bike is unsafe or not equipped as required by law (41-6a-1110).

As responsible cyclists, we must do our part to stay safe and avoid collisions with motor vehicles. In order to accomplish that objective, it is our obligation and legal requirement to comply with Utah's bicycle safety laws. These laws are in place for our protection as we venture onto Utah's roadways to share the road with motorists. My advice to all fellow cyclists is to make it a priority to learn the laws, follow them, and have a safe ride!

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