
[Senate, August 1, 1973—Substituted by amendment by the Senate, in part, (Saltonstall) for House Order No. 7181.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE OPERATION AND EQUIPMENT OF BICYCLES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 85 of the General Laws is hereby
2 amended by striking out section 11B, as most recently
3 amended by chapter 484 of the acts of 1971, and inserting in
4 place thereof the following section:

5 *Section 11B.* Every person operating a bicycle upon a way,
6 as defined in section one of chapter ninety, shall have the
7 right to use all public ways in the commonwealth except
8 limited access or express state highways where signs specifi-
9 cally prohibiting bicycles have been posted, and shall be subject
10 to the traffic laws and regulations of the commonwealth and
11 the special regulations contained in this section, except that:
12 (1) the bicycle operator may keep to the right when passing
13 a motor vehicle which is moving in the travel lane of the way,
14 (2) the bicycle operator shall signal by either hand his
15 intention to stop or turn, and (3) bicycles may be ridden on
16 sidewalks outside business districts when necessary in the
17 interest of safety, unless otherwise directed by local ordinance.
18 A person operating a bicycle on the sidewalk shall yield the
19 right of way to pedestrians and give an audible signal before
20 overtaking and passing any pedestrian.

21 Operators of bicycles shall be subject to the following
22 special regulations:

23 (1) The operator shall ride single file on any way except
24 when passing.

25 (2) The operator shall not ride other than upon or astride a

26 permanent and regular seat attached to the bicycle. The
27 operator shall not carry another person on said bicycle, except
28 on a baby seat attached to the bicycle, provided that such
29 seat is equipped with a harness to hold the child securely in
30 the seat and that protection is provided against the child's
31 feet hitting the spokes of the wheel.

32 (3) The operator shall give an audible warning whenever
33 necessary to insure safe operation; provided, however, the use
34 of a siren or whistle is prohibited.

35 (4) The operator shall park his bicycle upon a way or a
36 sidewalk in such a manner as not to obstruct vehicular or
37 pedestrian traffic.

38 (5) The operator shall not permit the bicycle to be drawn
39 by any other moving vehicle. The operator shall not tow any
40 other vehicle or person, except that bicycle trailers properly
41 attached to the bicycle to allow for firm control and braking
42 may be used.

43 (6) The operator shall not carry any package, bundle or
44 article except in or on a basket, rack, trailer or other device
45 designed for such purposes. The operator shall keep at least
46 one hand upon the handlebars at all times.

47 (7) Every bicycle operated upon a way shall be equipped
48 with a braking system to enable the operator to bring the
49 bicycle traveling at a speed of fifteen miles per hour to a
50 smooth, safe stop within thirty feet on a dry, clean, hard,
51 level surface.

52 (8) During the period one half hour after sunset and one
53 half hour before sunrise the operator shall display toward the
54 front a white light which shall be visible for not less than
55 three hundred feet in the direction in which the bicycle is
56 proceeding or facing or a front-facing colorless reflector, and
57 toward the rear a red light or red reflex reflector visible for
58 not less than three hundred feet to the rear when in the
59 lower beams of the headlamps of a motor vehicle.

60 (9) During the period from one half hour after sunset and
61 one half hour before sunrise the operator shall display a reflex
62 reflector or reflective material on the pedals visible from the
63 front and rear from a distance of two hundred feet when in

64 the lower beams of the headlamps of a motor vehicle and
65 additional reflective material visible from each side of the
66 bicycle, either on said bicycle or on the person of the operator,
67 for a distance of two hundred feet.

68 (10) No bicycle shall be offered for sale or rent unless it
69 meets the requirements of clause (7), and no new bicycles
70 shall be offered for sale or rent after January 1, 1974, unless
71 it meets the requirements of clauses (8) and (9) with the
72 exception of the front white light.

73 (11) Any federal product safety standards relating to
74 bicycles which are more stringent than the requirements of
75 clauses (7) through (10) shall supersede said requirements.

76 (12) No bicycle shall be operated upon a way with handle-
77 bars so raised that the operator's hands are above his
78 shoulders while gripping them. Any alteration to extend the
79 fork of a bicycle from the original design and construction of
80 the bicycle manufacturer is prohibited.

81 (13) Competitive bicycle races may be held on public ways,
82 provided that such races are sponsored by or in cooperation
83 with recognized bicycle organizations and further provided
84 that the sponsoring organization shall have obtained the
85 approval of the appropriate police department or departments.
86 Special regulations regarding the movement of bicycles during
87 such races, or in training for races, including, but not limited
88 to, permission to ride abreast, may be established by agree-
89 ment between the police department and the sponsoring
90 organization.

91 (14) The operator of a bicycle shall report any accident in-
92 volving either personal injury or property damage in excess
93 of one hundred dollars, or both, to the registrar of motor
94 vehicles and the police department in the city or town in which
95 the accident occurred.

96 Violations of any provision of this section may be punished
97 by a fine not to exceed twenty dollars. The parent or guardian
98 of any person under age eighteen shall not authorize or know-
99 ingly permit any such person to violate any of the provisions
100 of this section. A bicycle operated by a person under the age
101 of eighteen in violation of this section may be impounded by

102 the police department, or in a town which has no police
103 department, by the selectmen, for a period not to exceed
104 fifteen days. A violation of any provision of this section by a
105 minor under the age of eighteen shall not affect any civil
106 right or liability nor shall such violation be considered a
107 criminal offense.

1 SECTION 2. Section 21 of chapter 40 of the General Laws,
2 as most recently amended by chapter 83 of the acts of 1971,
3 is hereby amended by inserting after clause (16A) the follow-
4 ing clause: —

5 (16B) For designating areas upon public streets to be used
6 as bicycle lanes.

1 SECTION 3. Section 14 of chapter 90 of the General Laws is
2 hereby amended by striking out the second sentence and
3 inserting in place thereof the following sentence: —

4 In approaching or passing a person on a bicycle the operator
5 of a motor vehicle shall slow down and pass at a safe distance
6 and at a reasonable and proper speed.

1 SECTION 4. Section 34A of said chapter 90 is hereby
2 amended by adding the following new paragraph: —

3 The term "pedestrian" as used in describing personal injury
4 protection in this section shall include persons operating
5 bicycles, tricycles and similar vehicles and persons upon horse-
6 back or in vehicles drawn by horses or other draft animals.

1 SECTION 5. Section 1 of chapter 90A of the General Laws
2 is hereby amended by striking out at the end of the second
3 sentence the following words: — "and one of whom shall be a
4 representative of an automobile club." and inserting in place
5 thereof the following words: —

6 "one of whom shall be a representative of an automobile club,
7 and one of whom shall be a representative of a recognized
8 bicycle club."