

# WHERE YOU CAN RIDE

**If you're moving as fast as traffic, you can ride wherever you want.**

**If you're moving slower than traffic, you can "take the lane" if it's not wide enough for a bike and a vehicle to safely share side-by-side.** The law says that people who ride bikes must ride as close to the right side of the road as practicable except under the following conditions: when passing, preparing for a left turn, avoiding hazards, if the lane is too narrow to share, or if approaching a place where a right turn is authorized. ([CVC 21202](#)) Unfortunately, some motorists and even police don't understand cyclists' right to "take the lane." If you have a legal problem based on this understanding, consider calling one of the bike-friendly lawyers we identify on our "[Crash Help](#)" page.

**Use the bicycle lane.** On a roadway with a bike lane, bicyclists traveling slower than traffic must use the bike lane except when making a left turn, passing, avoiding hazardous conditions, or approaching a place where a right turn is authorized. [CVC 21208](#)

**You don't have to use the "protected bike lane."** Once a bike lane is separated from moving traffic with posts or car parking or anything else, it's no longer a "bike lane" according to the law; it's a "separated bikeway." CVC 21208 does not apply. You may ride outside of the separated bikeway for any reason. (SHC 890.4d)

**Ride with traffic.** Bicyclists must travel on the right side of the roadway in the direction of traffic, except when passing, making a legal left turn, riding on a one-way street, riding on a road that is too narrow, or when the right side of the road is closed due to road construction. [CVC 21650](#)

**Mopeds and high-speed electric bikes are not like regular bikes.** Gas-powered bicycles and type 3 electric bicycles (with top assisted speeds of 28 mph) may not be used on trails or bike paths or lanes unless allowed by local authorities. They may be used in bike lanes or separated bikeways adjacent to the roadway. [CVC 21207.5](#) They require helmets and may not be operated by people under age 16.

**Low-speed electric bicycles are almost like regular bikes.** Type 1 and 2 electric bicycles (with top assisted speeds of 20 mph) are allowed wherever regular bikes are allowed unless a sign specifically prohibits electric bicycles.

**Bike path obstruction:** No one may stop on or park a bicycle on a bicycle path. [CVC 21211](#)

**Sidewalks:** Individual cities and counties control whether bicyclists may ride on sidewalks. [CVC 21206](#)

**Freeways:** Bicycles (including motorized bicycles) may not be ridden on freeways and expressways where doing so is prohibited by the California Department of Transportation and local authorities. [CVC 21960](#)

**Toll bridges:** Bicyclists may not cross a toll bridge unless permitted to do so by the California Department of Transportation. [CVC 23330](#)