

Proposed Test Questions for Motor Vehicle License Exam Relating to Bicycle Operation and Driving around Cyclists

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As a means to improve the woefully low level of public knowledge about bicycle operation, safety issues and traffic law, this article proposes adding carefully-written questions to motor vehicle operator license exams. These questions were deliberately written to invoke common misinformation about these issues. The object is to inspire driver's education programs and motorists' training materials to correct this misinformation.

Question 1:

The goal of this question is to illustrate that cyclists are legitimate users of the road and that they must follow the same laws as do other drivers.

Illustration showing a typical urban arterial roadway (4 lanes plus center turn lane) with an intersection and traffic light. Near the intersection, there is an added right-turn "pocket". There are five cyclists labeled 1-5:

Cyclist (1) is riding across the intersection in the crosswalk, against the light (i.e. through a red light).

Cyclist (2) is approaching the intersection in the left turn lane, signaling a left turn.

Cyclist (3) is riding on the left (wrong) side of the road, very close to the curb.

Cyclist (4) is riding near the center of the right through lane (to the left of the right-turn lane). (The lane is too narrow to share with passing traffic.)

Cyclist (5) is in the second (inside) lane, passing a car that is turning right into a driveway.

Which of the cyclists shown in the picture is/are riding legally, according to state law?

- (A) Cyclist #1, because he has been riding on the sidewalk
- (B) Cyclist #1 and also #3 because he can see traffic coming.
- (C) Cyclists #2, #4 and #5 because they are obeying the same laws as other drivers.
- (D) Cyclists #1, and #4.
- (E) None of the above.

The correct answer (the legal cyclists) is C (cyclists #2, #4 and #5).

Question 2:

The goal of this question is to illustrate that cyclists have an equal right to use the road as do other drivers and that motorists passing other traffic have the duty to wait until it is safe to pass.

As you are driving on a two-lane road with very narrow lanes, you catch up to a person on a bicycle, who is riding near the middle of the lane. You wish to pass. Which of the following answers is correct?

- (A) The cyclist should not be on the road, so you blow your horn to tell him to get out of your way as you force your way by.
- (B) The cyclist should not be on the road but you have to wait until he moves.

(C) The cyclist has as much right to be on the road as you do. You must wait until it is safe to pass, and then give adequate clearance.

(D) The cyclist should be riding on the left, facing traffic but you can't run him over.

(E) The law requires the cyclist to ride as near as possible to the edge of the road so that you can pass the cyclist in the same lane of traffic no matter how narrow the lane may be.

The correct answer is C. Answers B and E are prime detractors, because many people mistake cyclists for pedestrians and confuse "as near as practicable", which is in the law, to mean "as near as possible", which is incorrect.

Want to help?

Is there an artist in the house? Question #1 needs an illustration. We could also use another question or two.

For comments, questions, contact f.oswald@earthlink.net

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