



# POULSBO POLICE STREET BEAT

EDITION 5



**What traffic laws do cyclists need to follow, and how do these laws affect their safety?**



## TRAFFIC LAWS CYCLISTS MUST FOLLOW:

### 1. Bicycles are considered vehicles

- Cyclists on roadways have all the same rights and duties as motor vehicles, except for specific exceptions under RCW 46.61.750-780 (RCW 46.61.755).

### 2. Stop signs and signals

- Cyclists must obey traffic lights and stop signs.
- Under the "Safety Stop" law (enacted Oct. 1, 2020), riders may treat a stop sign as a yield, but must still fully stop at red lights, school bus stop signs, and railroad crossings (RCW 46.61.190).

### 3. Right-of-way rules

- Yield to pedestrians at sidewalks/crosswalks (RCW 46.61.770).
- At intersections, yield per standard vehicle rules (RCW 46.61.180).

### 4. Lane positioning

- Ride with traffic, not against it (RCW 46.61.770).
- Ride as far right as is safe, but may move left to pass, avoid hazards, or to prepare for a turn (RCW 46.61.770).
- On one-way streets with multiple lanes, cyclists may ride near the left lane if safer.

### 5. Group riding

- Up to two bicycles or riders abreast are permitted (RCW 46.61.770).

### 6. Hand signals required

- Must signal, left, right, and stop/deceleration (RCW 46.61.758).

### 7. Equipment

- Must have working brakes (RCW 46.61.780).
- Night riding requires a white front light (visible at least 500 feet) and a red rear reflector (and optional red light) visible 600 feet (RCW 46.61.780).

### 8. No "hooking" or clinging

- You cannot cling to or attach your bike to another vehicle (RCW 46.61.765).

### 9. Riding on sidewalks

- The state Model Traffic Ordinance, adopted by the City of Poulsbo, prohibits riding on sidewalks in business districts, such as downtown, Viking Avenue, the State Route 305 corridor, and College Marketplace (WAC 308-330-555).

### 10. Helmets

- Individuals under age 18 riding on a bicycle must wear a helmet within Poulsbo (PMC 10.14.030).

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** Since bicycles are legally defined as vehicles under RCW 46.61.755, riders are subject to the same rules and penalties as motor vehicle operators. Bicyclists who violate traffic regulations may be ticketed. Washington law treats cyclists as full-fledged road users and encourages safety through clear rules: ride with traffic, stay visible, communicate intentions, and ensure vehicles give space. These laws work together to reduce collisions, improve predictability, and enhance overall safety on shared roads.



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