



LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE

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Law gives bicyclists equal right to travel Louisiana roads

Motor vehicle drivers in Louisiana should be attentive and cautious when encountering bicycle riders, who have an equal right to travel on the road as drivers of cars, trucks and motorcycles, the state's highway safety director said.

Saturday's cycling death of East Baton Rouge Parish Councilman Buddy Amoroso is a tragic reminder of the need for all drivers to know and follow traffic safety laws that pertain to bicycles, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission Executive Director Lisa Freeman said.

With only a few exceptions — including interstates and some high-traffic bridges — Louisiana law gives bicyclists equal access to roads, Freeman said. However, bicyclists and motor vehicle drivers do have specific legal obligations when they meet on the road.

"Louisiana law is very clear that the driver of a car shall exercise due care while the motor vehicle is passing the bicycle and shall leave at least three feet between the car and the bike," Freeman said.

"Bicyclists must obey the same traffic laws as motor vehicle drivers while staying as near to the right side of the road as possible."

According to the Highway Safety Research Group at LSU, 21 bicyclists were killed on Louisiana roads in 2016, the most recent year for which verified statistics are available. Another 707 bicyclists were injured in 2016. Nationwide, 840 bicyclists were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2016, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The Louisiana Office of Tourism offers these safety tips for bike riders:

- Always wear your helmet. Be sure it covers your forehead and fits properly.
- Ride on the right. Always ride with traffic.
- Look and signal before turning.
- Ride single-file if you are riding with a group.
- If you stop, get completely off the road.

For more information about bicycle safety, laws and cycling maps, visit the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development's bicycle and pedestrian page.

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