

**Submission
No. 41**

DRIVER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ROAD SAFETY

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My submission is primarily concerned with the safety of people who walk and who ride bicycles. I request that the following recommendations be included in driver education, training and road safety.

1. Training for children

Learning to use the road network is not only relevant to drivers. There are many people who use the road network who are too young to drive, too old to drive or have other reasons for not driving, such as medical conditions, licence disqualification or a choice to use other transport modes. It is therefore important that all road users are trained how to use the road as both a pedestrian and as a cyclist.

This training could easily be provided through the education system as one program for infants children and one program for primary school children. Children at infants level need to be taught basic bicycle skills to be used off the road network and also how to cross the road safely as a pedestrian. Children at primary school need to be taught how to cycle on roads. This is particularly relevant at age 12, when children are no longer allowed to cycle on footpaths and therefore must cycle on the road.

By providing road user training to children, it will ensure that all road users (not just those who drive) understand the road rules and can be confident using the road network. It will also provide time for people to reinforce this knowledge through practice and for people to gain empathy for people who walk or cycle, long before they start driving.

2. Training for adult drivers

As part of the driver licensing system, all drivers should be asked a minimum number of questions relating to sharing the roads with bicycles. Currently, there are many people in the community who do not understand basic elements of the road rules relating to bicycles such as the fact that riders may (and should in many circumstances) ride two abreast. There is also a common misunderstanding about the right of people to ride bicycles on the road, usually because there is a perception that they "don't pay their way". Research has shown that people who walk and ride bicycles actually create a range of economic benefits (a, b, c, d) that far outweigh any costs created. Cars also impose many burdens on society such as air pollution, noise pollution, crash costs, excessive land use, obesity-related illness and more. Drivers should therefore be taught that walking and cycling are beneficial to individuals and to society.

3. Training for heavy vehicle drivers

Heavy vehicles pose an additional risk to people walking and cycling. In London, they have found that a very high proportion of cycling-related deaths were caused by lorries (trucks) (e). This was found to primarily be an issue with left-turning vehicles where the driver was unable to see a person on a bicycle positioned to the left of the heavy vehicle. Training for the drivers of heavy vehicles should emphasise this risk. Training should also emphasise the minimum passing distance legislation (1m up to 60 km/h and 1.5m above) and should highlight that minimum passing distance should be greater again for heavy vehicles. Some research could be done on this, but an approach used by some people has been to increase the minimum clearance by an additional 500mm (1.5m up to 60 km/h and 2m above) to account for the size of the vehicle and the uncertainty of the tracking of the rear wheels. Heavy vehicles should also be fitted with "underrun protection" which ensures that people are not pulled under the rear wheels of a heavy vehicle.

- a. Simmons E, Key M, Ingles A, Khurana M, Sulmont M, Lyons W 2015, White Paper Evaluating the Economic Benefits Non-motorized Transport, US Federal Highway Administration.
- b. Blondiau T, Zeebroeck B van, Haubold H 2016, Economic Benefits of Cycling, Elsevier Science.
- c. Raje F, Saffrey A, The Value of Cycling, University of Birmingham.
- d. Mason J, Fulton L, McDonald Z 2015, A Global High Shift Cycling Scenario, UC Berkeley Transportation Library.
- e. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/sep/30/lorries-face-london-ban-plans-improve-safety-cyclists>