

Bike/Walk Midland: Following the Rules of the Road

Traffic flow and road user safety are both enhanced when all follow the rules of the road. This means that drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, in-line skaters, and power chair users need to know those rules AND to obey them. When everyone behaves in predictable ways, motorized and non-motorized transportation is safer and more efficient. There is a need in Midland for people to better understand and comply with the rules of the road.

Cars coming to a stop sign must yield when a pedestrian is waiting to cross, and not block the pedestrian's path whether there is a crosswalk or not. Drivers need to be looking for sidewalk users at all intersections and must not turn into crossing pedestrians.

Cars are not required to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks, so people have to wait for traffic to clear before using mid-block crosswalks. At intersections, pedestrians do have the right of way when crossing with a light or when the car has a stop sign, but there can be confusion when a car is coming from the opposite side of the intersection, so both drivers and sidewalk users need to pay attention. Bicycles riding on the sidewalk are legally pedestrians and must behave as such.

Bicyclists on the street are defined as vehicles in Michigan law, so they need to behave like vehicles and obey vehicle traffic laws. For night riding, cyclists are required to have a front light and rear reflector, but a rear light is much more effective. When there are parked cars, bicycles need to ride far enough to the left to avoid the "door zone" and should not weave in and out of the spaces between parked cars. Cars approaching from behind should expect the cyclist to be far enough left so that the rider is out of the door zone.

When everyone follows the rules, everyone can get along.

For more information: www.midland-mi.org/government/departments/planning/Planning/planninghome.htm