

Vulnerable road users



The road is there to share and road safety is everyone's responsibility. Whether you're in a car or truck, on a motorcycle or bike, or on or around the road as a pedestrian, we can help keep ourselves and others safe.

Vulnerable road users, such as motorcycle riders, bicycle riders and pedestrians do not have a protective 'shell' like a car or truck, so are more vulnerable to injury or fatality if involved in a crash.



The facts

- Around 20 per cent of all NSW road fatalities and serious injuries are motorcycle riders, yet motorcycles account for only four per cent of all registered motor vehicles in NSW.
- On average, nine bicycle riders are killed and almost 1900 hospitalised in NSW each year.
- Each year, around 60 pedestrians are killed and more than 1020 are hospitalised on or around NSW roads.
- Speed contributes to about 41 per cent of road fatalities each year. A small decrease in vehicle speed can make a big difference to yours or someone else's chances of survival. A pedestrian hit by a car travelling at 50km/h is more than twice as likely to die as one hit by a car travelling at 40km/h.

As a driver

Drivers need to be aware of vulnerable road users at all times. It is crucial that we all make an effort to ensure the safety of all road users.

Be aware of motorcycle and bicycle riders

Drivers need to be aware of motorcycle and bicycle riders on the road; they are smaller than cars and can be harder to see. **As a driver, you can increase your awareness and help keep motorcycle and bicycle riders safe by:**

- Scanning the road environment and watching for motorcycle and bicycle riders, especially approaching intersections and roundabouts.
- Checking your blind spots often for motorcycle and bicycle riders.
- Never underestimating the speed of a bicycle rider and not cutting them off by moving in front of them. Sometimes bicycle riders can travel faster than a car, particularly in slow-moving traffic.
- Checking your rear-view and side mirrors to avoid opening your car door into the path of motorcycle and bicycle riders.
- When you're pulling out from the kerb, look especially for motorcycle and bicycle riders. They have a narrower profile than cars and can be hard to spot.
- Being prepared to slow down and allowing a bicycle rider to travel away from the kerb as at times, bicycle riders may need the full width of a lane to ride safely because of rough road edges and gravel.

- Allowing a distance of at least 1 metre when passing a bicycle rider when the speed limit is 60km/h or less and 1.5 metres when the speed limit is more than 60km/h.
- Giving motorcycle riders space. They may have to avoid an obstacle that wouldn't matter to you, but could be a serious problem for them.

Be aware of pedestrians

In high pedestrian activity areas, always adhere to the speed limit. As a vehicle's speed increases, so does the risk of injury or death to pedestrians hit in a crash. When driving, always:

- Slow down on roads where there are likely to be a lot of pedestrians, especially near schools and shopping centres; and near hotels, as there are likely to be pedestrians who have been drinking.
- Give way to pedestrians crossing the road or driveway into which your vehicle is turning.
- Be aware that pedestrians are harder to see at night and in poor weather.
- Don't assume that a pedestrian has seen you and will wait for you to go past.
- Be mindful that vulnerable pedestrians, such as children and older people, may need extra time to cross, and children can be difficult to see and may act unpredictably.



Motorcycle riders

Riding a motorcycle can be both physically and mentally demanding. Motorcycle riders are more exposed and risk serious injuries if involved in a crash, so to best protect yourself when riding a motorcycle you need to understand and manage your risks and choose the safest gear available to maximise your safety on the road.

Choosing the safest gear

- Always wear an approved helmet, securely fitted and fastened. You can find safety ratings for helmets at crash.org.au.
- Always wear protective gear that covers your whole body, made of abrasion resistant material, has impact protectors over joints and back protection for the spine.
- Enhance visibility by wearing brightly coloured clothing.

To help choose the safest motorcycle gear, including gloves, pants and jackets, visit motocap.com.au for product ratings for best protection and comfort when you ride.

Managing road safety risk

- Scanning, setting up and buffering are three essential elements for safe motorcycle riding. A three-second crash avoidance space gives you time to react and respond to situations in front of you. You should set up for any situation when there is potential for something to enter the space three seconds in front of your motorcycle.
- To enhance your safety on the road, you should perform routine maintenance checks, such as checking tyre pressure and tread, to ensure your motorcycle is roadworthy before heading out on the road. When riding, you need to be aware of other road users and not assume that drivers have seen you. As with drivers, you should always use safe behaviours relating to speed, tiredness, alcohol and distraction.
- You also need to follow the same rules and advice as drivers when riding near and around pedestrians.

Bicycle riders

In recent years, cycling as a mode of transport has become more popular in NSW. As a bicycle rider, you should plan a safer journey by using cycle ways, shared paths and quieter streets and maintain focus on the road and other road users when a safer path is not available. You need to understand and manage your risks and choose the safest gear available to maximise your safety on the road.

Choosing the safest gear

- Always wear an approved helmet, it is the law.
- Wear bright clothing during the day and reflective clothing at night to improve your visibility.
- It is a requirement for bicycles to have at least one operable brake and bell fitted, and during night time and poor visibility, the bike and/or rider must have front and rear lights and reflectors.



Managing road safety risk

- Riding in a predictable manner and indicating your intentions by giving hand signals when changing lanes or turning.
- Taking extra care around trucks and buses as they may not always be able to see you in their blind spots.
- Always obeying the road rules, including traffic lights, stop signs and give way signs.
- When riding on a shared path, always keep left and give way to pedestrians. If necessary, use your bell to warn pedestrians you're approaching and try to allow them a metre of space when passing.

Pedestrians

Everyone is a pedestrian at some time or another. To ensure your safety on and around NSW roads, follow these tips:

- Look Out Before You Step Out – always check both ways before you cross a road.
- Always use pedestrian crossings and make sure vehicles have stopped before you start to cross, make eye contact with the driver where possible.
- Never start crossing when the red ‘don’t walk’ signal is showing.
- Avoid crossing between parked cars, or at the front or back of buses.
- Use the footpath where available.
- Unplug earphones and put away phones to increase focus on the road and vehicles ahead and around you.
- Check for turning vehicles at intersections.
- Wear brighter clothing at night to increase visibility.
- When using a shared path, where possible, try to keep to the left side of the pathway to allow room for other pedestrians or bicycle riders to pass.
- Take extra care around trucks and buses and be aware they may not be able to see you.



More information

Visit the Transport for NSW road safety website (roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au) for more information on staying safe as a motorcycle rider (roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/stayingsafe/motorcyclists), bicycle rider (roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/stayingsafe/bicycle-riders) and pedestrian (roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/stayingsafe/pedestrians) and to learn about other important road safety topics.

If you're driving for work, visit the Towards Zero website (towardszero.nsw.gov.au/workplace) to complete the Road safety: Everybody's business online learning course to learn about road safety risk and how you can stay safe on NSW roads.

