



Cycling in Germany –  
The most important rules

ENGLISH



## Welcome to Germany

Cycling is very popular in Germany.

We have summarised the most important rules of the road for you in this brochure to help you navigate German road traffic as safely as possible on your bike.

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# ENGLISH





## Riding a bicycle

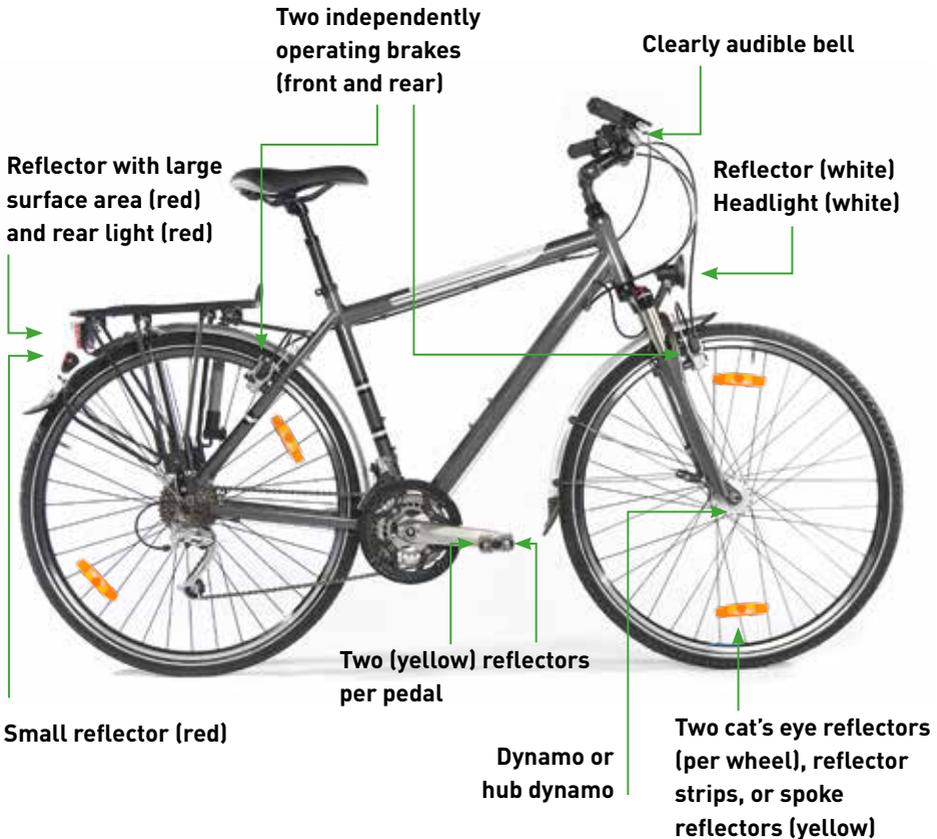


In general, the **same traffic rules that apply to car drivers** also apply to cyclists.

(Right of way rules, one-way streets, traffic lights, etc.)

# Roadworthy bicycles

Bicycles must be equipped with lights, brakes, and a bell.  
Only one person is allowed to ride on any one bicycle.





## General traffic rules



### RIGHT-HAND TRAFFIC

In Germany, traffic must drive on the right-hand side of the road. You should therefore keep to the right-hand side of the road when cycling. Make sure to maintain sufficient distance from parked vehicles when doing so. There is a risk of a car door being opened and hitting you. Always overtake other vehicles on the left, even on dedicated cycleways.



Give way



Stop!  
Give way



### GIVE WAY SIGN

These traffic signs require you to wait and give way to other vehicles.

### RIGHT OF WAY RULE "RIGHT BEFORE LEFT"

The right-of-way rule at intersections is "right before left", unless there are traffic signs or traffic lights indicating otherwise. This means that people entering the intersection from the right are entitled to go first.

Intersections and junctions that are difficult to recognise are specially marked, and the "right before left" rule also applies there.

Right of way



Priority road



These signs indicate that other drivers must give way to you.

### **RULES FOR CYCLISTS:**

- Only one person is allowed to ride the bicycle.
- Keep both hands on the handlebars.
- Ride one behind the other if possible.
- Always wear a bicycle helmet. It may save you from a serious head injury.
- Cyclists are not permitted to hold on to other vehicles.
- You must observe the traffic rules. Cyclists can also be stopped by the police and receive fines.
- Do not talk on the phone while cycling and do not look at your smartphone.
- Do not ride a bicycle if you have been drinking alcohol.
- Always be ready to brake at entrances and exits.
- Caution: Truck drivers often cannot see you, so always stand, ride and stop behind the truck.
- Small children are only allowed to ride in a child seat or in special trailers.





## Cycleways



A **cycleway** is separated from the road by a kerb and from the pavement by markings, paving or a low kerb.

A bicycle is a vehicle and therefore belongs on the road. Children must ride on the footpath until their 8th birthday. Children are still allowed to use the footpath until their 10th birthday.

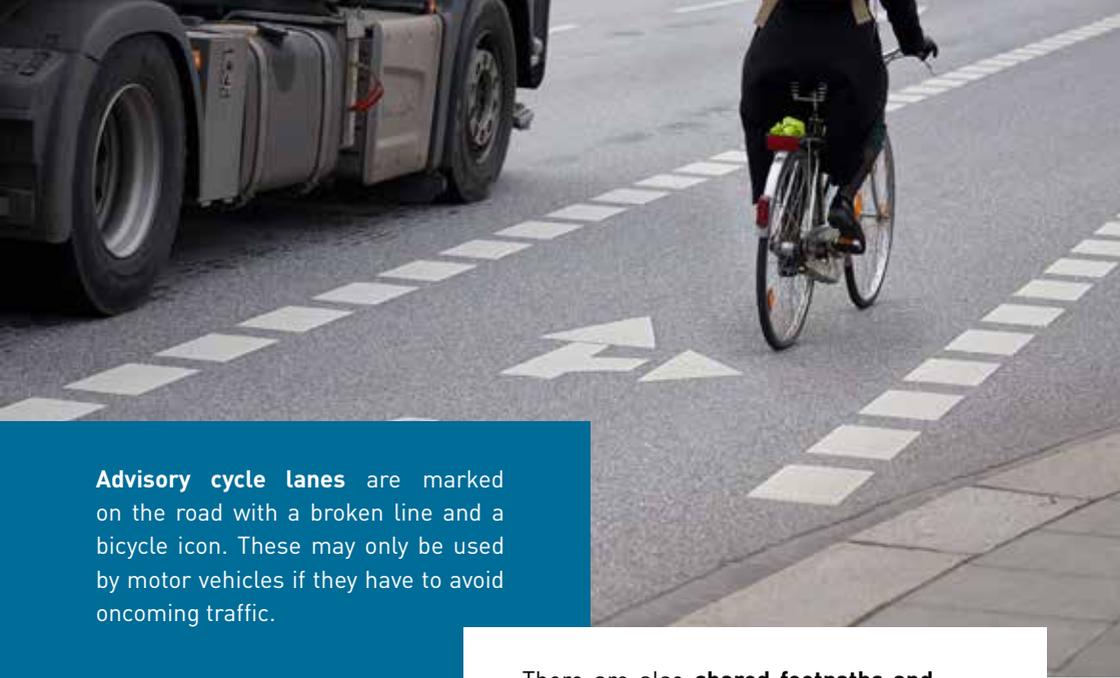
Riding on the footpath is not permitted for anyone else; this even applies to parents accompanying their children.

Cycleway/cycle lane



**Cycle lanes** are marked on the road with a solid white line and the blue cycle lane sign. Motor vehicles are not allowed to drive on this strip.





**Advisory cycle lanes** are marked on the road with a broken line and a bicycle icon. These may only be used by motor vehicles if they have to avoid oncoming traffic.

There are also **shared footpaths and cycleways**. Cyclists must ride on the cycleway (not on the road). You must share the path with those on foot. Therefore please be considerate of those on foot and ring the bell if you need to so that you can pass them.





Cycleway



Shared footpath  
and cycleway



Cycleway next  
to a footpath

### CYCLISTS MUST RIDE HERE:

Whenever a cycleway is signposted with a white bicycle on a blue background, you must use it unless there are obstacles blocking the path. In that case, you may carefully move out onto the road. If it is not possible to move safely into the road, you must dismount and push your bicycle around the obstacle.

Cycleways without signage may be used, but it is not obligatory to do so. In this instance, you can also ride on the road.

### CYCLISTS ARE ALLOWED TO RIDE HERE:

Other areas (e.g. footpaths, pedestrian zones) may only be used if they are marked with an additional sign depicting a bicycle and the word "frei", or a sign indicating cycling in both directions.





**Fast cycle routes** provide cyclists with direct connections as well as high speed cycling.



As a rule, no other traffic is allowed in bicycle zones, with the exception of very small electric vehicles.



Do not ride on streets with this sign.



If there is no additional bicycle "Frei" sign, you must get off your bicycle and push.

### CYCLISTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO RIDE HERE:

Motor vehicles only



Motorway



Footpath



No vehicles of any kind



No cycling



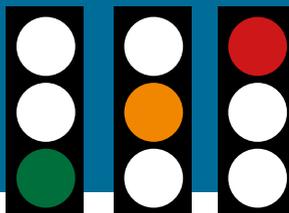


## How to deal with intersections



### TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Cyclists must also obey traffic lights. If there are special bicycle traffic lights, these must be observed. Sometimes there are also combined traffic lights for cyclists and pedestrians.



**When the light is green** you can proceed, but make sure to stay alert.

**When the light is yellow** you are no longer allowed to enter the intersection.

Come to a stop.

Stop! **When the light is red** you must always stop.

Sometimes, such as when the traffic lights are not working, the police will regulate the traffic. A **police officer's hand signals** always take priority.

#### **Both arms down:**

You can go now, but make sure to stay alert.

#### **One arm up, one arm down:**

Attention! Wait at the intersection for the next signal.

#### **Arms stretched out to the right and left:**

Stop!



## TAKE CARE WHEN TURNING

### How to turn a corner safely:

#### 1. Shoulder check:

First, look over your shoulder and check the traffic.

#### 2. Give a hand signal:

Use your arm to indicate clearly where you intend to turn.

#### 3. Choose your lane:

If there is a cycle lane, use it. Move into the appropriate lane in good time before reaching the intersection.

#### 4. Make the turn:

When turning right, be careful of pedestrians crossing the road at the same time, as they have priority. When turning left, you must always allow oncoming vehicles to pass. If there is a designated cycle lane, follow it.

#### 5. Green arrow for cyclists:

At traffic lights where there is a green arrow for cyclists, cyclists are permitted to turn right after stopping, even when the light is red.



## INDIRECT TURNS

If you don't feel safe turning left on the road, you can also turn left indirectly:

1. First drive straight ahead across the intersection.
2. Stop on the right-hand side of the road, you may have to dismount.
3. Wait until the road is clear.

Then cross the road and continue.



## Specific hazards



### BLIND SPOTS

Cyclists are particularly at risk when trucks or cars are turning right. If you are in a blind spot, the driver of the truck may not be able to see you.

Ride defensively. If in doubt, relinquish your right of way or dismount and switch to the footpath. You will, however, have to push your bicycle on the footpath.

### THEREFORE

- Always position yourself at a distance behind a truck/bus; never next to it, in front of it or directly behind it.
- Trucks and buses need a lot of space. Keep your distance.
- Take extra care when cycling. If in doubt, relinquish your right of way. Collisions between bicycles and trucks or buses are often fatal.
- Only pass cars on the right if there is sufficient space to do so.
- Make eye contact with the driver.

### ZEBRA CROSSINGS

Pedestrians have priority when crossing the road. They are allowed to cross the road and all vehicles, including bicycles, have to wait.

Failure to observe this rule can result in fines.





## OTHER DANGERS

**Take extra care** on shared footpaths and cycleways and only ride at a speed that allows you to brake and stop whenever you need to! Adjust your speed to those on foot. Drivers also may not see you at intersections and drive-ways.

Keep your distance from parked vehicles in case a door is opened suddenly.

## IF YOU ARE INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT

If you get into an accident, call for help. Never leave the scene of an accident without first reporting it. This is a punishable offence.

**Call the emergency services number: 112**

**You can use this phone number even if you don't have any credit on your mobile phone.**

**The emergency services centre will ask the following questions:**

**Where** did it happen?

**What** exactly happened?

**How** many people were involved?

**Which** types of injuries/emergencies are there?

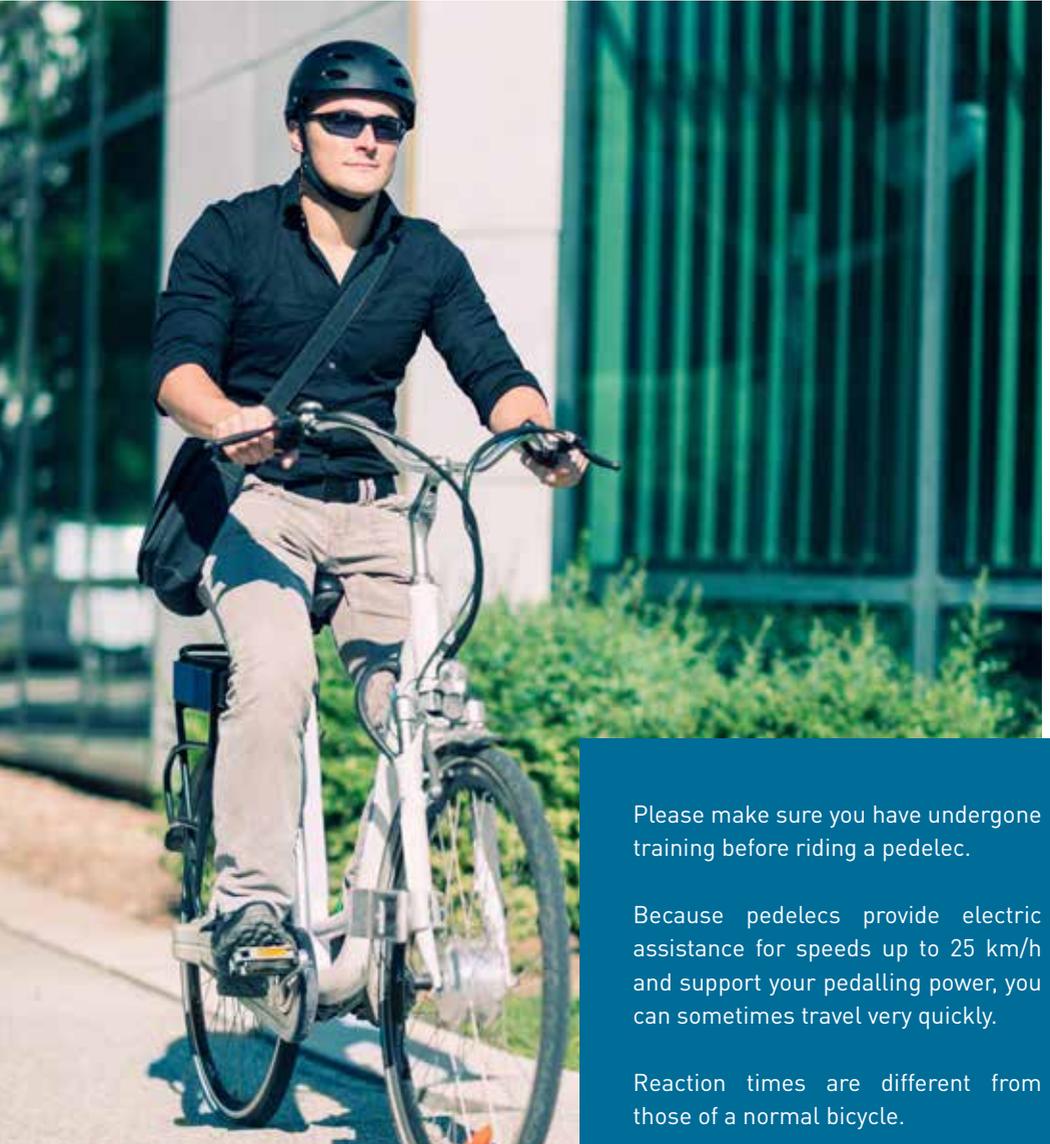
Wait for any further questions!

Wait for the ambulance or the police and continue to provide information.

If you are unable to make the call yourself, draw the attention of others to the situation so that they can call for help.



## Riding a pedelec



Please make sure you have undergone training before riding a pedelec.

Because pedelecs provide electric assistance for speeds up to 25 km/h and support your pedalling power, you can sometimes travel very quickly.

Reaction times are different from those of a normal bicycle.



You can and must ride your pedelec on cycleways.

The same rules apply as when riding a regular bicycle. You are not allowed to ride on the pavement. You are allowed to use fast cycle routes.

You do not need an insurance licence plate, nor is there a minimum age for the use of a pedelec.

**We do, however, strongly recommend wearing a helmet.**





## Further information:



[www.germanroadsafety.de](http://www.germanroadsafety.de)

This website also has this brochure available for download in other languages free of charge.



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