

Advice for drivers

- **When overtaking a cyclist the Highway Code says to leave as much space as you would when passing a car.**
- **At 30mph we advise 1.5metres is the minimum safe distance.**
- **At faster speeds allow 2 metres.**
- **In slow moving urban traffic (below 20 mph), never overtake cyclists unless you can leave at least 1 metre.**
- **If there's not enough space to pass safely, travel behind the cyclist until space becomes available.**

If you're driving a car or other motor vehicle make sure you follow the Highway Code when overtaking people cycling. The Highway Code says to leave as much space as you would when passing a car. If there's not enough space to pass safely, travel behind the cyclist until space to pass is available.

The Highway Code specifically warns that cyclists may have to pull out suddenly because of hazards like drain covers, or oil and ice patches. It advises to give plenty of room and be alert to changes of direction.

How much 'wider of the rider' should you stay?

The safe distance for passing a cyclist depends on the speed, and size, of the vehicle you're driving. As much space as you would allow for passing a car, as stated in the Highway Code, is a good guide.

TFL's London Cycle Design Standards say that motor vehicles travelling at 30 mph should allow a minimum passing distance of 1.5 metres (five feet). In traffic moving at walking pace the police may consider 1 metre adequate. According to the police, anything below a metre may be considered unsafe in any circumstances and the driver can be fined if they are judged to be guilty of careless and inconsiderate driving and endangering a cyclist.

LCC and other UK cycling organisations advise that at faster speeds the appropriate passing distance needs to be greater than 1.5 metres. For a large vehicle in windy conditions the passing distance needs to be greater still because of the impact the vehicles draft.

Why it's important to Stay Wider of the Rider

You might be unaware of the danger and intimidation close passing causes. For a cyclist, being close passed can be very scary – imagine a one-ton object dropping next to you unexpectedly.

Up to a third of reported near misses between cyclists and motor vehicles involve close passing. This isn't just dangerous for cyclists, it also discourages people from cycling - fear of road danger is the main reason people choose not to cycle.

What the Highway Code and the Law say

The Highway Code has three rules relating to close passing:

[Rule 163](#) explains that you should not get too close and give cyclists (as well as all other road users) at least as much room as you would when overtaking a car. It provides this photo to emphasise how much space to give cyclists when passing:



[Rule 212](#) repeats the point about not passing too closely and adds advice to watch out for cyclists who are looking back because they may be about to turn or change direction.

[Rule 213](#) again advises to give cyclists space when passing and explains they may have to take evasive manoeuvres to avoid drains or potholes.

What to do if people are cycling two abreast

Cyclists are legally allowed to ride two abreast. When they do, drivers should allow a safe passing distance from the outside rider.

Remember that cyclists might move from side to side

The London Cycle Design Standards advise that the 'dynamic envelope' of a cyclist (the space they are likely to move from side to side while cycling) is 1m.

Did you know that cyclists are trained to ride away from the kerb and parked cars, and sometime to ride in the middle of the lane?

When you're driving you also need to be aware that young people and other cyclists will follow the Governments' Bikeability advice (the training scheme for cyclists) by riding a metre (three feet) away from parked cars to avoid being hit by an opening car door. Forcing cyclists nearer to parked cars by passing too closely risks causing a collision which could throw the cyclist into the path of a motor vehicle.

Bikeability also advises cyclists to think ahead; and in places where overtaking could be hazardous, such as when passing side streets, to position themselves where a vehicle would be - in the middle of the lane. This is called the primary road position or 'taking the lane' and cyclists are advised that, on narrower roads, it is safer to ride there than nearer the kerb, moving aside for passing traffic when safe to do so.