

RANCHO SANTA FE
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FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Rancho Santa Fe, California 92067-0410

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STAYING SAFE WHILE SHARING THE ROAD

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif. — We've had a relatively wet winter this year, but while we may experience a few more rain showers in the coming months, Spring is definitely right around the corner. As the weather warms, people will begin to look for ways to enjoy the outdoors while getting some exercise. Once such activity that proves to be quite popular throughout our district is bicycle riding. Unfortunately, the same remote roadways that provide cyclists with scenic rides and challenging terrain can make for hazardous riding conditions. The following tips for both drivers and cyclists can help keep the roadways safe for everyone.

For Drivers

- **Be Attentive** – Inattentive drivers can be extremely dangerous, especially when they change lanes without looking or drive in the bike lane. They also create dangerous situations when they attempt to do other things while driving, such as talking on the phone or eating. When you are driving, please focus only on the road. If you need to attend to another matter while driving, safely pull over in a parking lot or rest stop.
- **Watch Your Blind Spots** – Be aware of other vehicles and cyclists around you, including in your blind spots. Always look before changing lanes to make sure no one else is there.
- **Use Your Turn Signal** – Be sure to use your turn signal when changing lanes or making a turn. This allows other motorists and cyclists to adjust what they are doing to allow for a safe lane change or turn.
- **Know Hand Signals** – Because most bicycles do not come with turn signals, cyclists use their hands to signal if they are planning on turning, stopping, etc. Familiarize yourself with these signals so that if a cyclist stretches his left arm out, for example, you know that he is indicating his intention to go left.

For Cyclists

- **Helmet** – California state law requires all children under the age of 18 to wear a helmet; however, ALL cyclists should wear a helmet, regardless of age.
- **Make Yourself Visible** – Do everything you can to make yourself as visible as possible. Always wear bright colors. This is especially important when riding in the dark. Adding reflective gear, a headlight, and flashing red LED taillight can also increase your chances of being seen by motorists.
- **Ride Like You're Invisible** – Even after doing all of the above, don't assume drivers see you. Just because you think a driver sees you does not mean that is the case. Ride defensively and be prepared for the occasions in which you are not seen by motorists.
- **Use the Bike Lane** – The bike lane was built specifically for cyclists in an effort to separate them from vehicles and increase safety. Whenever possible, ride in the bike lane. When planning a bike route, avoid roads that do not have a dedicated bike lane. If you find yourself on a road that does not have a bike lane, stay as far to the right as possible.
- **Ride with Traffic** – One study showed that riding the wrong way was *three times as dangerous* as riding the right way, and for kids, the risk is *seven times greater*. Cars aren't expecting traffic to be coming at them from the wrong way and are approaching at a much higher relative speed.
- **Beware the Blind Spot** – When stopping at an intersection, don't stop in a car's blind spot. It's better to stop behind a car, rather than to the right of it. Also, always check your blind spot and look behind you when changing lanes or making a turn.
- **Make It a Win-Win Situation** – Remember, the cyclist never wins when hit by a moving vehicle. Make every effort to ensure your own safety.

The mission of the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District is "To protect life, property, and environment through prevention, preparedness, education and emergency response." Formed in 1946, the Fire District now spans approximately 42-square miles and protects over 29,000 citizens. The Fire District currently operates out of four full-time fire stations and serves the communities within and surrounding Rancho Santa Fe and 4S-Ranch.

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Resources:

www.bicyclinglife.com

www.bicyclesafe.com

www.sharetheroadsafely.org