

NMTS Policy

Topic: Obeying Traffic Laws

Date: November 2001

Policy:

- The New Mexico Touring Society encourages and expects its members to obey all state and municipal traffic laws. The State of New Mexico and the City of Albuquerque require bicyclists to obey all traffic laws that apply to motor vehicles. Also, NMTS is a member of the League of American Bicyclists, which advocates that bicyclists obey traffic laws. The Albuquerque Traffic Code Subsection 16.5 states the traffic regulations that apply to persons riding bicycles:
 - Operators of bicycles have the same rights as operators of automobiles in the use of streets, highways, and roadways within the City of Albuquerque, except as otherwise specifically provided herein.
 - Every person riding a bicycle upon a roadway shall be subject to all duties applicable to the drivers of motor vehicles, except otherwise expressly provided in this article and except which by their nature can have no applications of this article to which a motorist is subject.
 - The Albuquerque Traffic Code also states that bicyclists shall obey traffic signals, signs and other control devices and shall give hand signals before turning or altering course.
 - Additional excerpts from the Albuquerque Traffic Code are given in the Metropolitan Albuquerque Bicycle Map. Call 768-Bike to request a copy.
- The New Mexico State Traffic Statute 66-3-702, Traffic Laws Apply to Persons Riding Bicycles, states that "Every person riding a bicycle upon a roadway shall be granted all of the rights and shall be subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle."
- The New Mexico Driver Education Curriculum states, "...Public roads are open to all licensed vehicles and to bicycles. Bicycles have all the rights and responsibilities of other vehicles but are sometimes invisible to drivers."
- The New Mexico Driver License Manual states that bicycle riders have the same rights and responsibilities as motor vehicle drivers. They must stop at traffic lights, signal their intentions and obey other traffic laws. They also have a right to ride on any public roadway in New Mexico, which means drivers must take special care when approaching or passing bicycles. Drivers should allow a distance of no less than five feet from the bicyclist when passing.
- Where not otherwise prohibited, bicyclists are permitted to use interstate highways in New Mexico, provided they ride on the shoulders. Bicyclists are prohibited from using the interstate highways within the boundaries of cities with a population of 50,000 or more.
- The NMTS believes bicyclists have a right to expect motorists to give them adequate space and accept their presence on the roadway. In return, the NMTS recognizes that motorists don't appreciate bicyclists that roll past stoplights, stop signs or a string of cars

waiting for the light. It annoys them and is dangerous for the bicyclist. Motorists won't respect a bicyclist's right to use the road if they see the cyclist breaking the laws that the motorists must obey. If motorists see bicyclists as being safe and law abiding, they will begin to accept the bicyclists on the same roads.

- Obeying the traffic laws makes bicycle riding safer. You may prevent an injury to yourself by obeying these laws.
- The NMTS also encourages its members to be courteous to motorists and not unnecessarily impede traffic. When road conditions are safe to do so, cyclists should allow motorists to pass by riding on the shoulder or as far to the right of the roadway as practicable.