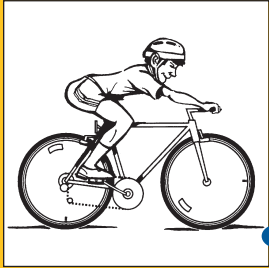
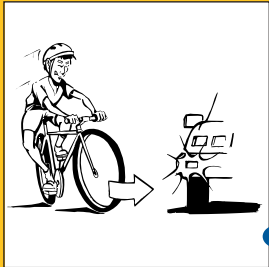




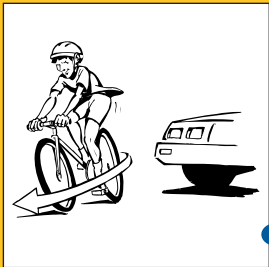
# 7: TROUBLE SITUATIONS



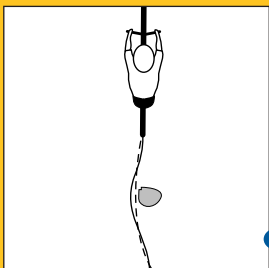
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## EMERGENCY MOVES

When you're moving fast and something gets in your way, slamming on the brakes doesn't always work. This section describes some emergency moves—such as the Quick Slow-Down, Instant Turn, and Rock Dodge—that you can practice in a quiet parking lot. Start slowly, then work your speed up, and practice, so when you need an emergency move, you make it automatically. This section also tells you why knowing how to fall might keep you from serious injury.

**The Quick Slow-Down:** When you stop fast, your weight shifts from your back wheel to the front. Even if you use both your front and back brakes your back tire can skid and start to lift. To slow down quickly: 1

- a. Push yourself as far back on the bike as you can. This keeps weight on the back tire.
- b. Put your head and torso as low as you can so you don't flip.
- c. Squeeze both brakes. If the back tire starts to slide or lift, ease up on the front brake.

**The Instant Turn:** Use the Instant Turn when a car turns in front of you while you're going straight. To make a very sudden right turn, you steer sharply left—towards the car—which makes you lean right. 2 Then you turn right hard, steering into the lean. 3

**The Rock Dodge:** The Rock Dodge is just a quick turn of the front wheel to miss a rock or hole right in front of you. 4 At the last second, turn the front wheel sharply left and back right again. Both your wheels should miss the hazard.

**How to Fall:** Most serious bicycle injuries involve brain damage, so the best way to protect yourself in a fall is by wearing a helmet. Otherwise, it's not easy to prepare for a fall. But if you have time to think:

- ▶ When you're about to hit a car, don't try to wipe out first; instead, stay upright as long as you can. If you get low you risk going under the wheels or hitting the sharpest parts of the car.
- ▶ If you go flying, tuck your head, arms, and legs into a tight ball and try to roll when you hit the ground. If you stick your arms out you're likely to break them, or your collarbone, or both.

## DOGS, PEDS, TRACKS, & ATTACKS

**Dogs:** 5 Options when a dog chases you:

- ▶ **Just stop.** Some dogs just want a good chase and will give up when you're not moving.
- ▶ **Stop and get off your bike, quick.** If the beast looks like it wants to attack, try to keep the bike between you and it. Shout something commanding, like "Go home!"
- ▶ **Try to outrun it.** This is not usually a good idea. Don't try to outrun it if you're not sure you can; too many cyclists have wiped out when running dogs get caught in their wheels. Don't try to hit the dog; you could lose your balance.
- ▶ **Use a dog-repellent spray.** But be careful: wind could blow the stuff back into your face. If a dog bites you, get to a doctor or hospital right away. Report the attack to police. If you can identify the dog, you might avoid a rabies test.

**Pedestrians:** 6 The law says you should yield to pedestrians on sidewalks and in crosswalks. Bicyclists must also stop at intersections to allow pedestrians to cross at marked or unmarked crosswalks (RCW 46.61.235 & 46.61.261). This can test your patience in busy commercial areas; however, if you want cars and pedestrians to respect bicyclists and to share the road, you must also respect them. What happens when you're riding down a busy street and find pedestrians crossing against a light?

- ▶ Alert them to your presence with a horn, bell, whistle, or voice. Remember, pedestrians look for cars, not bicyclists.
- ▶ If there are people in a crosswalk, slow down or stop entirely. If you go between pedestrians, make sure they see you and pass carefully. Never go between parents and their kids.

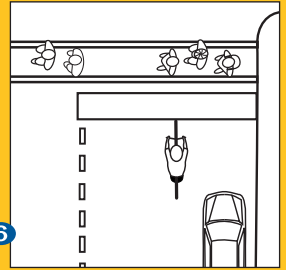
**Railroads:** Some railroad tracks cross streets diagonally. If you go over these tracks without changing your direction, your tires might get caught between a track and the road. Instead, try to cross tracks at a right angle 7 —especially when the street's wet.

**Rocks, Gravel and Sand:** Turning or braking suddenly on gravel or sand can make you slide or wipe out. See "Braking" on page 30 to learn how to brake when it's slippery.

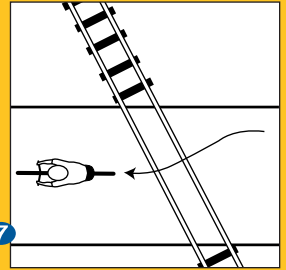
**Drain Grates:** 8 Avoid drain grates with long openings that can catch your tires.



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**Truck Wake:** When you're riding on a highway and you're passed by a large truck or bus, keep a firm grip on your handlebar. The suction of the vehicle's wake could pull you suddenly to the left.

**Assault:** If somebody's determined to attack you, they will—whether you're on foot, bike, or in a car. If you're afraid to bike in a certain neighborhood, don't—or go with friends and stay on busy streets. Here are some other tips:

- ▶ The best defense is to stay alert. If you see someone who looks like they'll hurt you, stay away from them.
- ▶ Don't stop, for any reason, in places where you think you're about to be attacked.
- ▶ Carry a defensive spray, such as pepper spray or dog repellent, where you can grab it quick. Remember that people who use this stuff often get it blown back in their own faces.

If you get knocked off your bike by a mugger, don't fight. Try to notice what they look like, then go to the nearest phone and call 911.

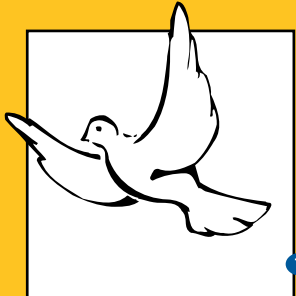
### CONFLICTS WITH MOTORISTS

A lot of motorists act mean toward bicyclists. Some will cut you off or curse you because they don't understand you're operating a vehicle, just like them. What should you do?

**Rule 1: Don't start a fight.** ① As long as you and your bike aren't damaged, don't start a fight—no matter how steamed you get. If you lose your cool, the motorist might decide to nail the next bicyclist that goes by. Or, worse, the motorist might decide to smash **you** with two tons of metal and glass—and speed off before you can even start to say “license plate.”

**Rule 2: Report harassment.** ② Motorists that touch you or put you in danger might be guilty of assault. Stop and write down everything you can remember: the license plate number, type of car, and where and when it happened. Then call police.

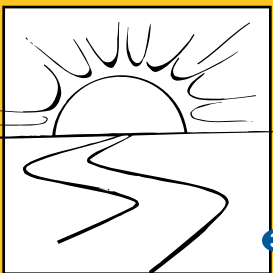
**Rule 3: Take the long view.** ③ If more cyclists follow traffic laws, more motorists will start to see bicycles as vehicles. You can help: Whenever possible, explain to your motorist friends the importance of sharing the road. Meanwhile, governments and bike advocates are teaching motorists to share the road through driver education, community outreach, and advertising.



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## WHAT TO DO AFTER A TRAFFIC COLLISION

If you're hurt in a traffic collision, don't ride away or shake off what seems like a minor injury—you might find later that it's worse than you thought. If you're a victim of or a witness to a traffic collision, here are the steps to take:

- ▶ Call the police. If needed, get medical help immediately.
- ▶ Get the following information from every vehicle driver: name, address, phone number, driver's license number, license plate number, make of car, insurance company name and policy number.
- ▶ Get the names and phone numbers of witnesses.
- ▶ Get the police report number from police on the scene.
- ▶ Write down how the crash happened.
- ▶ Keep (or photograph) any damaged clothes or equipment.

**Also, if you're a victim:**

- ▶ Don't get mad at the scene. Keep a level head so you can ask questions and take notes.
- ▶ If you're injured, don't move unless you're sure you won't injure yourself more.

