

Shetland is not a very urban place, but in Lerwick there can be a lot of traffic. At the roadsides, cars are tightly parked so it is often difficult to see in advance if pedestrians are moving to cross the road.

Town streets



- ◆ Drivers are requested not to go too close up to the cyclist or blow the horn. The cyclist might swerve and lose their balance.
- ◆ Cyclists are requested - as are other slow road users - to let others behind pass. On single track roads this means to be aware of the traffic behind and if someone is queuing to use the next passing place to let the driver pass.
- ◆ Single track roads
- ◆ By riding further out from the edge of the road it will force following traffic to overtake properly instead of squeezing past dangerously close.
- ◆ make them more visible to drivers.
- ◆ give them room to manoeuvre if necessary.
- ◆ keep them clear of drain covers, broken glass or whatever may be at the side of the road.

The roads in Shetland are mainly good for cycling. Sometimes the surface is a bit uneven but it is no worse than cyclists from other places will be used to. There are some things to remember though - we have a lot of single track roads in rural areas and verges are rarely tarred. Traditionally cyclists were told to stay on the left side of the road but the opinion now is they should be near the middle of the lane. This will:

Shetland's roads

Sharing the Road in Shetland

We want to encourage cycling in Shetland - it is healthy, enjoyable, environmentally friendly and a great way to experience our wonderful scenery. Distances are easy to cover, roads are good and many people cycle regularly - to work, for sport or just for leisure.



This leaflet is a reminder of good practice for both cyclists and drivers.



- ◆ The sun can be quite strong so remember your sun screen if you are out all day.
- ◆ The wind can change suddenly in direction and intensity. Strong head winds can hinder your progress and exhaust you. Keep an eye on the forecast, be prepared to change your plans, shorten your trip or even abandon your bike for the day.
- ◆ Fog occurs regularly in Shetland and this could affect visibility. Wear Hi-Vis and remember to put your lights on.
- ◆ Short showers which can be so intense that you will be soaked when they are gone - keep waterproof clothes ready to hand and take shelter if possible.

You may hear us complaining about the weather but it's not as bad as all that - Shetland has lovely fresh air, ever-changing light and never gets too hot! However, it is very changeable and you should always be prepared, particularly for the wind. Watch out for:

Shetland's weather



"I always hope that cyclists and motorists can share the road safely by giving each other plenty of respect and, importantly, space. Cyclists do get very worried by a couple of things in Shetland: First, having cars overtaking us by 'squeezing' past on main roads when there is traffic coming the other way. Second, seeing a car head right past a passing place leaving no room to pass unless either the cyclist, car or both having to pull over to the side."



Phil Hibbert

As you can see cycling has been popular in Shetland for a long time!



For more information about Shetland go to:

- ◆ www.shetland.org
- ◆ for cycling information www.cycleshetland.com
- ◆ Go to YouTube and search for: A to Z of Shetland Shetland Cycling Sportive

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When children grow up a bike becomes less of a toy and more their mode of transport. They can do BIKABILITY which is National Standards Cycle Training. There are 3 levels:

- ◆ Level 1 can be taught to P1-4 pupils and is taught in a traffic free environment, like a playground, and teaches essential bike handling skills.
- ◆ Level 2 is taught in P6 on quiet roads around the school and teaches children the skills necessary to be able to negotiate most on-road situations.
- ◆ Level 3 is taught on-road and gives children and adults information on how to plan journeys, how to deal with complex road junctions and how to become an independent cyclist.

The Shetland Islands Council's Road Safety Officer can provide information for everyone interested in BIKABILITY training for their children, and would be happy to hear from anyone interested in being a volunteer trainer.

BIKABILITY - improve cycling abilities

It is recommended that young children learn to cycle using balance bikes - these simple bikes have no pedals, no chain and no stabilisers. They are sturdy and easy to get started on, they help children to learn balance and steering - later they can learn to pedal. The younger children can learn the better.

Learning to cycle



"Cycling in Shetland is like no other place. Stunning scenery, hundreds of miles of quiet roads and you won't be short of a hill or two!"

Robin Atkinson of Shetland Wheelers

Borrowing a cycle

When you borrow a bicycle - whether for holiday hire or from a friend - please pay particular care in adapting it to fit your needs. Only a bicycle you feel familiar with will give you the best control for safe cycling.

You will also be able to cycle longer as you will tire less easily cycling in a comfortable position:

Make sure you:

- ◆ Adjust the height of the handlebars.
- ◆ Adjust the height and inclination of the saddle.
- ◆ Try it out, test it and get familiar with it.
- ◆ Check the brakes work and that the handles are where you want them.

When you have a new or borrowed bicycle it is useful to look for a quiet place away from traffic to do some handling exercises and get familiar with it.

Cycle Hire in Shetland

Bicycles can be hired from various outlets in Shetland:

Grantfield Garage - Lerwick
Tel: +44 (0)1595 692709
www.grantfieldgarage.co.uk

P&T Coaches - Unst
Tel: +44 (0)1957 711666
Email: burnsptcoaches@aol.com

Shetland Community Bike Project - Lerwick
Tel: +44 (0)1595 690077
Email: shetlandbikeproject@ukfsn.org

Sumburgh Hotel - Sumburgh
www.sumburghhotel.com
Tel: +44 (0)1950 460201

Unst Cycle Hire - Unst
www.unstcyclehire.co.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1957 711393

DRIVERS

Shetland is no different to anywhere else: we can all be in too much of a rush. Cyclists are traffic participants with the same rights and obligations as other users of the roads. They are just more vulnerable. A minor bump is an inconvenience for a vehicle, but could result in serious injury for the cyclist.

As a driver please be patient - don't take a risk that could endanger a cyclist.

Overtaking cyclists

Think twice before overtaking in town - the traffic situations can change very quickly, and vehicles appear from a side road or a parking place.

Drivers are obliged by the Highway Code (Rule 163) to give you 'at least as much room as a car' when overtaking.

If you are going to overtake a cyclist:

- ◆ Please be patient - wait until there is enough room and time to complete the manoeuvre, particularly if the view is restricted by a bend or brow of a hill.
- ◆ Don't make your decision too early; slow down and approach cautiously.
- ◆ Before passing, check the mirrors, indicate, and leave plenty of space for the cyclist.
- ◆ Don't overtake a cyclist immediately before you intend to turn left. Bikes can move more quickly than you might think.

When you're driving

- ◆ Look out for cyclists, especially when turning - make eye contact if possible so they know you've seen them.



- ◆ Always check both directions before pulling out at a junction (Remember that old slogan: Think once, think twice, think 'bike?').
- ◆ Use your indicators - signal your intentions so that cyclists can react.
- ◆ Follow the Highway Code including 'stop' and 'give way' signs and traffic lights.
- ◆ Cyclists have the same rights on the road and as a driver you should remember that you are sharing the road with cyclists.
- ◆ Cyclists are more vulnerable than car users - take particular care near cyclists and give them plenty of room at all times.
- ◆ Expect cyclists in unexpected places - always check your mirrors for cyclists before turning.
- ◆ If you're uncertain as to the intention of another road user - including cyclists - hold back rather than risk a wrong assumption.
- ◆ Watch out for cyclists coming up on your near side when turning left or moving over to the left - check mirrors and blind spots carefully.
- ◆ When parking check the door mirror and look behind you before you open the door to make sure you don't hit a cyclist.

- ◆ When turning left allow any cyclist ahead of you to pass the junction rather than overtake them and turn sharply across their front wheel.
- ◆ Don't overtake a cyclist if you can see that the road narrows ahead - if they're travelling faster than you think, you could end up squeezing them off the road.
- ◆ Don't drive aggressively around cyclists or sound your horn.
- ◆ Cyclists may be travelling faster than you think (could be 20mph plus) - judge their approaching speed with care before pulling out at a junction.
- ◆ Take special care on roundabouts - you must give way to any vehicle approaching from the right, and that includes cyclists.
- ◆ Be prepared to wait behind a cyclist turning right in the same way you would for a car - rather than squeezing past or getting impatient.
- ◆ Match your speed to the conditions and make sure you will be able to stop well within the distance that you can see to be clear - on country roads there could be a group of cyclists, a horse rider or pedestrians around the next bend.
- ◆ At night, use dipped headlights when approaching cyclists as you would when approaching any other road user.
- ◆ Allow cyclists extra room in wet weather as surfaces will be wet and slippery.
- ◆ Consider riding a bicycle for some of your own journeys to get a better understanding of the risks cyclists face.
- ◆ Keep up to date with your knowledge of the Highway Code and follow its advice.

Always remember that you're sharing the road with cyclists.

TRUCK & BUS DRIVERS

In a collision between a lorry and a cyclist, it is invariably the cyclist who will be injured. Therefore, lorry drivers have a particular responsibility for taking extra care to avoid collisions with cyclists. However, cyclists also have a responsibility for avoiding these collisions, and to cycle safely and responsibly to minimise conflict with lorries.

Both cyclists and HGV drivers are responsible for their own and each other's safety. Many problems would be solved if both groups gave each other plenty of room on the road.

As they are not necessarily cyclists themselves, lorry drivers often do not understand how fast they appear to be going from the cyclists' level, or how the side wind from their vehicles can affect riders when they are overtaking them.

Equally, cyclists (especially children and less experienced riders) may be unaware of the difficulties which lorry drivers may have in seeing cyclists, or the fact that when an HGV pulls out to the right, it may be doing so to make space before turning left.

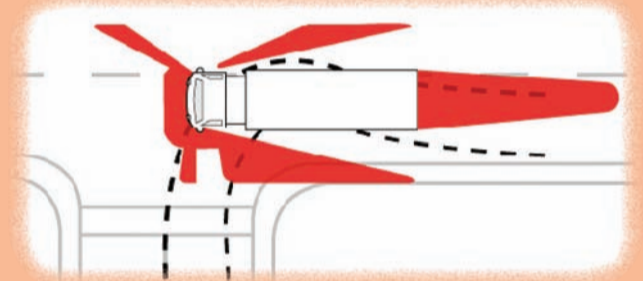
When a large vehicle is turning left at a junction and there is a cyclist (who may also be turning left or going straight on) on the nearside of the vehicle.

If the driver does not see the cyclist and turns left, there is a strong chance that the cyclist will be knocked under the wheels of the vehicle or crushed against guard railings. This is very likely to result in serious or fatal injuries to the rider.

Even a minor collision in these circumstances can cause major injuries.

Large Vehicle Blind Spots

Cyclists and drivers should pay attention to a large vehicle's blind spots and stay well back behind these areas, particularly if the vehicle is turning left, as the back end will move over to the left of the road possibly knocking into you if the driver has not seen you. Remember, if you can't see the driver in his rear view mirror - then he can't see you either.



CYCLISTS

Cyclists and their visibility

On Shetland's main roads, cyclists in dark clothing might not stand out from the landscape of varied greens and browns. The weather might be foggy or raining and low sun can dazzle, therefore it can be very difficult to spot cyclists on our roads especially when driving at high speed.

Cyclists should wear light-coloured or fluorescent clothing which helps other road users to see you. Reflective patches or logos on the moving parts of the cyclist's body show up particularly well

Use good quality lights front and rear at night and in low light levels. It is necessary to check that they work every day while cycling

Cycling safely

It is not only drivers who have a responsibility for safety. The Highway Code has a section of rules for cyclists too: please make sure you read and understand it before taking to the road.



Things to remember:

- ◆ Show your intentions to drivers by being consistent and predictable. If your road position remains the same and your body movement is calm, it suggests to the driver that the cyclist is concentrating and in control.
- ◆ If there is a need to adjust your road position, it is good to look over your shoulder if possible and indicate the intention to move.
- ◆ Please make bold confident signals using your arms before changing position or turning.
- ◆ Always ride in single file on narrow or busy roads and when riding round bends.
- ◆ Take care near road junctions, other road users might not notice you.
- ◆ Ride positively, decisively and well clear of the kerb - look and signal to show drivers what you plan to do and make eye contact where possible so you know drivers have seen you .
- ◆ Ride in a straight line past parked cars rather than dodge between them, and allow at least a full door's width between you in case the doors are suddenly opened.
- ◆ Use appropriate hand signals to indicate that you're turning left or right.
- ◆ Follow the Highway Code including observing 'stop' and 'give way' signs and traffic lights .
- ◆ We recommend wearing a correctly fitted cycle helmet, which is securely fastened and conforms to current regulations.
- ◆ Do not assume the vehicle is going straight ahead just because it is not signalling left.

- ◆ Don't use a mobile phone or earphones.
- ◆ Avoid riding up the inside of large vehicles (see blind spot picture) like lorries or buses, where you might not be seen. When turning left, a lorry will often pull out to the right first. This creates a wide gap on the left side between the vehicle and the kerb, which many cyclists think is safe to ride into. But in fact this is a very dangerous place to be. As the lorry begins to turn, it will swing back to the left very close to the kerb. The gap between the kerb and the lorry will disappear in an instant.
- ◆ If a lorry in front of you is waiting in a queue of stationary traffic (particularly at the approach to any junction), do not undertake it. Hang back behind the vehicle and let it move off first.
- ◆ If you have to stop or give way at a junction where there are no motor vehicles waiting, it may be best to wait at a point about 1 metre away from the kerb to ensure that other vehicles arriving after you (especially lorries) pull up behind you, rather than alongside you (where they may forget that you are there and fail to see you when they pull off). However, if you do not feel confident about doing this, and prefer to wait at the junction in a position next to the kerb, you should take particular care if a lorry then pulls up alongside you. If this happens, let it move off first, so you have time to see if it is going to turn. Watch out for any guard-railing on the pavement beside you, and make sure that you cannot get trapped if the lorry does in fact start to turn left across you. Remember, the driver may not have seen you. Driving a large vehicle on busy and crowded roads is difficult, and even with all the vehicle's mirrors, the driver may not spot a cyclist who is on the nearside of their vehicle.