



In-depth training and safety information for TriMet's professional bus operator workforce

Cycling – *Is growing in our region*

Cycling is growing and will continue to grow in our region. In fact, the Portland region is well known nationally for its support of cycling. People cycle for pleasure and for transportation. Some cyclists belong to and ride with clubs. More and more however, people are cycling to commute to work, shopping or school. Cyclists ride to save the environment and to save on transportation costs. The cyclist you see every day may be a friend, neighbor, or one of your customers. They may even be a co-worker.

Cyclists – *Have a variety of skill levels*

Bicycles are vehicles and cyclists have a legal right to use the roadway the same as any other vehicle. Cyclists may be young or old, and can be experienced professionals or novices. All of these types of riders travel in the bike lane and we must be willing to share the road with them.

Cyclists are vulnerable. Some of the problems they face include:

- Narrow and unfriendly roadways
- Edge of the road is often in bad condition
- Debris blows to side of the road.
- Storm grates
- Potholes
- Parked cars



Bicyclists and pedestrians are the most vulnerable users of our street system

Cyclists do not have the same ability to brake, accelerate or turn that motorists do. Accomplished cyclists can go 30 mph or faster and experienced cyclists can go 15 to 20 MPH for long periods on level roadways. In slower traffic cyclists can easily pass you, or quickly come into your space from the side.

As professionals we must use our skills, knowledge and experience to compensate for the unsafe actions of others.

Space – *Your Insurance*

Always keep as much space as possible when operating around cyclists. Four feet is the minimum, and remember, the closer you are, the slower you must go. Give yourself enough space to stop if you must compensate for an unsafe action, and should a cyclist fall, enough space to keep them away from your bus.

Your following distance depends not on the size of the vehicle ahead, but on the stopping ability of your bus. Always keep 4-seconds of following distance space ahead of your bus, even with cyclists to maintain a safe "Space Cushion" ahead of your bus.

Intersections – *Intersections are the most dangerous locations along any route.*

Use the following skills to increase your intersection safety:

- Scan far ahead (one to two-blocks distance).
- As you approach the intersection, cover the brake and slow down if needed.
- Be ready to stop, even if your light is green and you have the right of way.
- At your "decision point", scan left–right–left prior to entering an intersection.
- **Rock and roll** (lean) in your seat to see around vision barriers.
- Keep scanning and keep your speed under control as you pass through the intersection.

Turns – *Increase your danger at intersections*

- Cyclists, cars and motorcycles can easily slip into the space on either side of your bus during turns.
- Scan left to right prior to turning, during the turn and then a third time as you complete the turn.
- Remember to **rock** and **roll** in your seat to see around vision barriers.
- Always clearly signal your intentions consistently in advance.
- Don't cut off approaching cyclists, yield to them, let them pass and then make your turn.

Passing – *Be aware of your draft.*

- Scan far ahead to spot cyclists early.
- Pass with at least a minimum of 4-feet of space.
- Buses push air to the sides so reduce your speed if the cyclist is moving much slower than you.
- Avoid passing unless necessary – the safest place is for them to be ahead of you.
- Pass only at wide spots, or split or change lanes to create enough space to safely pass.
- Confirm your clearances in the mirror as you pass.

Bike Lanes – *Yield to cyclists*

- Anytime you cross or enter a bike lane to turn, to change lanes, to park, or to make a service stop, you do not have the right of way, you must yield to cyclists.
- You may enter a bike lane to make a service stop, but yield to any approaching cyclists.
- Be aware of the potential for cyclists to appear from behind your bus when you exit a stop.
- Clearly signal your exit prior to exiting and if you moving out from the curb, use the Yield Light.

Bus Operators are Professionals – *Cyclists represent a wide variety of skill levels*

Be proactive. Scan for cyclists and know their speed and direction of travel. If you are not sure of their intentions, **slow down**. Often they will travel faster than you, so when you can, keep cyclists out in front of you where you can easily see them.

Keep emotions out of your driving. Instead drive by your skill and professionalism. Never use the bus to intimidate or try to make a point to a cyclist, pedestrian or other motorist. The only ones we can educate are ourselves.

Please remember the National Safety Council's standard. As professionals we are expected to do everything reasonable to avoid an accident. Some cyclists make mistakes, but so do motorists, pedestrians and, at times bus operators. Be tolerant and learn to compensate for the mistakes of others. It will make your driving easier.

Cyclists do not stand a chance in an accident with a bus. Fortunately, collisions with bicyclists are rare but highly traumatic for all involved. Cyclists are somebody's loved ones, maybe one of ours. A collision with a cyclist or pedestrian is clearly not a life experience you want to ever remember.

Share the road safely. We are the professionals.

The Future – *Traffic conditions will not get any better as our population increases.*

With the problems of traffic and pollution we need to get people out of their cars and into other modes of transportation. Cycling is a growing part of the solution to reducing both traffic and pollution.

As professional bus operators we can safely share the road with cyclists. **Watch out for them.** Show them common courtesy and concern for their welfare. You are commended for the watchful consideration you give to cyclists.

Bike Boxes – Currently at many Portland intersections



The keys to operating safely around cyclists are:

Scan far ahead of your bus.

Keep your eyes moving and *rock and roll* (lean) to see around vision barriers.

Keep your speed under control when operating around cyclists.

And,

Be ready to compensate for the unsafe actions of others.

Commit yourself to safety!

Your feedback, suggestions and questions are encouraged. Please contact Allen Morgan or Dion Graham with your comments (503-962-6418, TriMet Mail stop TA).