

# Do you know the rules for cyclists?



In 2019, 10 cyclists in Hokkaido were in fatal accidents (compared with 4 in the previous year), and accounted for 6.6% of all 152 traffic fatalities.

There are also a number of accidents in which cyclists fail to check for safety at intersections and stop signs, and ignore traffic lights.

In order to curb traffic accidents involving cyclists, the Prefectural Police are strengthening their warnings for cyclists, and creating measures to arrest offending cyclists directly linked to traffic accidents and forwarding them to prosecutors' offices.

Cyclist incidents within Hokkaido

Year	Arrests	Warnings
2019	33	12,927
2018	17	12,653
2017	33	11,671

※Citation : Hokkaido Prefectural Police homepage



※Parallel and double-riding, riding while holding an umbrella, and forcibly passing pedestrians are some of the illegal actions cyclists may commit inadvertently.

Up to now, regulations against ignoring signals, riding while intoxicated, crossing lowered railway bars, and other dangerous actions have been in effect. With the revised traffic law as of June 30, 2020, 15 “disruptive driving (riding)” actions are now also regulated.

Please take this opportunity to check the regulated items below.

○The 15 dangerous actions regulated by the revised traffic law

## 1 Ignoring traffic lights

Cyclists must not ignore and then proceed through red lights.



## 2 Not stopping at designated places

Cyclists must stop at stop signs and other designated places.



### 3 Proceeding through railway crossings

Cyclists must not proceed through railway crossings when bars are lowered and bell is ringing.

### 4 “No Entry” violations

Cyclists must not enter areas designated by road signs etc. as “no entry” (*tsuukoukinshi*)

### 5 Vehicle violations on sidewalks (go-slow violations)

Even on sidewalks where signs permit vehicles, cyclists must pay attention to and go slowly near pedestrians.

### 6 Traveling violations when on sidewalks

Cyclists must go slowly on sidewalks where signs permit bicycles.

On sidewalks without signs permitting bicycles, cyclists must keep to the edge near the road and go slowly.

Cyclists must temporarily come to a stop if they will interfere with pedestrians.



※Bicycles permitted on sidewalk



The following cyclists may travel on sidewalks even in the absence of signage.

- Those under 13 years old
- Those over 70 years old
- Those with a disability listed on the *shintai-shougaisha-fukushihou-beppyou* (even if under 18)
- Those who cannot proceed safely any other way
- ※e.g. when lots of vehicles are parked on the road and you can't move right to avoid traffic, when there is heavy vehicle traffic on a narrow road, when drivers are tailgating, running others off the road, honking needlessly, or driving recklessly.
- ※The conditions under which a cyclist “cannot proceed safely any other way” must be objectively verifiable, not just the cyclist’s subjective feeling.

### 7 Roadway traveling violations

Cyclists must proceed along the roadway when it is separate from sidewalks.

Cyclists must keep to the left of the road when traveling in the roadway.



### 8 Pedestrian walkway traveling violations

When proceeding along a pedestrian walkway, cyclists must travel at speeds that would not interfere with pedestrians.

### 9 Intersection safety violations

When proceeding through an intersection, cyclists must not interfere with vehicles traveling in priority lanes or clearly wide roads.

## 10 Interference with priority at intersections

When turning right at an intersection, cyclists must not interfere with vehicles proceeding straight or turning left.

## 11 Traffic circle safety violations

Cyclists must not interfere with vehicles proceeding through a traffic circle.

## 12 Bicycles with poor brakes

Cyclists must not ride a bicycle with brakes that do not work, front-wheel-only or back-wheel-only brakes, or no brakes.

## 13 Other safety violations

Cyclists must soundly operate their handlebars, brakes, etc., and must not travel at a speed or in a manner that endangers others. (This includes holding the handlebars with only one hand while holding a phone or umbrella, or listening to music with earphones while riding)



## 14 Driving (riding) under the influence

Cyclists must not ride while under the influence of alcohol.



## 15 Disruptive driving (riding)

Cyclists must not take any action that aims to disrupt other traffic, including: riding against traffic, running others off the road, sudden and unnecessary braking, incessant bell-ringing, not maintaining distance between vehicles, and unlawful passing.



Cyclists who commit 2 violations must attend a safety class within 3 years, and will face a fine of up to ¥50,000 for noncompliance (age 14 and up).

※Details vary by prefecture, but classes last about 3 hours and cost about ¥6,000.

Additionally, multiple violations may be assessed at the same time. For example, if a cyclist ignores a red light while also riding disruptively, they will be assessed 2 violations at once and thus be ordered to attend a safety class.

Furthermore, Prefectural Police are calling attention to the fact that using your phone while riding (*nagara-sumaho*) is extremely dangerous and can lead to serious accidents. This is prohibited under “Other safety violations” listed above.

○Bicycles are light road vehicles

Hokkaido traffic law designates bicycles as light road vehicles. This means that cyclists must follow traffic rules for vehicles while riding. Prefectural police have highlighted 5 rules for vehicles below that are especially important for cyclists.

Even if you are only going shopping in your neighborhood, please ride safely. Our collective efforts will contribute to the safety of our friends and families.

1. In principle, bicycles travel on the roadway, and sidewalks are the exception.
2. Vehicles travel in the left lane.
3. Pedestrians have priority on sidewalks, so ride slowly near the vehicle lane.
4. Follow all safety rules.
5. Children must wear helmets.

Especially because bicycles can be ridden easily by many people, safety is essential!



**Summary of major violations and punishments for cyclists**

Violation	Punishment(s)	Applicable law and abstract
○Driving under the influence	Up to 5 years in prison or fine of up to ¥1,000,000	Article 65 Paragraph 1 It is prohibited for any person to drive a vehicle or streetcar while under the influence of alcohol.
○Ignoring traffic lights	Up to 3 months in prison or fine of up to ¥50,000	Article 7 A pedestrian or the driver of a vehicle or streetcar that is using a road must obey the signals indicated by traffic lights or the alternative signals of an officer.
○ Not stopping at designated places	Up to 3 months in prison or fine of up to ¥50,000	Article 43 If road signs or markings specify that a vehicle or streetcar must come to a stop... the vehicle or streetcar must come to a stop immediately in front of the

		stop line indicated by road signs or markings.
○No lights	Fine of up to ¥50,000	Article 52 When traveling on a road at night, a vehicle must have its headlights, road lights, taillights, and other lights turned on.
○Double-riding etc.	Fine of up to ¥20,000	Article 57 Paragraph 2 A public safety commission may prescribe restrictions on the number of accompanying personnel or the weight, size, and way of carrying cargo for light road vehicles.
○"No Entry" violations	Up to 3 months in prison or fine of up to ¥50,000	Article 8 It is prohibited for a pedestrian or the driver of a vehicle or streetcar to enter onto a road or any part of a road onto which entry is prohibited by a road sign or marking.
○Roadway traveling violations	Up to 3 months in prison or fine of up to ¥50,000	Article 17 Paragraph 1 On a road with demarcations between the sidewalk or the side strip and the roadway, a vehicle must proceed along the roadway.
○Not keeping to the left	Up to 3 months in prison or fine of up to ¥50,000	Article 17 Paragraph 4 A vehicle must proceed along the part of the road to the left of the center.
○Light road vehicles traveling abreast of each other (parallel riding)	Fine of up to ¥20,000	Article 19 The driver of a light road vehicle must not pull abreast of another light road vehicle.
○Violations while riding standard bicycles on sidewalks	Fine of up to ¥20,000	Article 63-4 Paragraph 2 If riding a standard bicycle on a sidewalk permitted by road

		signs or markings, one must ride at reduced speed when on the part of the sidewalk between the center and the roadway, and must come to a stop if the bicycle's progress would prevent pedestrians from proceeding.
○Nonuse of bicycle crossing lanes	Fine of up to ¥20,000	Article 63 Paragraph 7 When proceeding through an intersection in the vicinity of a bicycle crossing lane, a person riding a bicycle must use the bicycle crossing lane.

※Citation : Hokkaido Prefectural Police homepage