

On foot & by bike



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This guide contains key traffic rules for pedestrians and cyclists. Take note that the illustrations of this guide are simplified. For example not all traffic signs are included in the illustrations.

This guide is in accordance with the Road Traffic Act that entered into force on June 1st 2020.

This guide can be used as a teaching resource and as a self-study material.

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When in traffic your actions affect on your own safety as well as the safety of others. A key principle is to anticipate what is going to happen before it actually happens and identify potential hazards in advance. Scan and assess the road and people around you - active observation gives you time to plan ahead. The law obligates all road users to anticipate.



Pay attention to fellow road users and the traffic situation.

Adjust your speed and distance from other road users according to the situation. Maintain a sufficient safety distance.



Keep your attention on the road.

By law, the use of mobile phones and other technical devices must not interfere with your handling of a bicycle. Use of a mobile phone can draw your attention away from traffic also when walking. For example it is best to stop before messaging. Avoid using headphones in traffic. It's important to hear when vehicles are approaching as well as what's going on around you.



How are you?

Tiredness, intoxicants, illnesses and medicines can weaken your ability to navigate in traffic. They may affect your balance or your ability to observe, assess or react to traffic situations.



Plot a safe route.

Give preference to pedestrian and cycle routes. Reserve enough time for your journey.



Pedestrians

Pedestrians are people travelling on foot, using scooters and wheelchairs or pushing their bicycles or mopeds instead of riding them. Also people skiing or using mobility devices assisting or replacing walking must follow the rules and regulations for pedestrians.



Cyclists

In the law a bicycle is seen as a vehicle and the cyclist as its driver. When cycling, pay attention to other road users especially pedestrians.

Keep a safe distance and take care when overtaking. Overtake cyclists ahead of you on the left hand side but make sure not to cause any danger. Overtake only when it is safe to do so.

When using an electric scooter that has a maximum design speed of 25 kph, you must follow the rules for cyclists.



Electric mobility devices



Electric mobility devices or aids with power no greater than 1 kW and maximum speed of 15 km/h can be used on pavements and other routes intended for pedestrians. When using these devices, one must follow the rules for pedestrians.



Light electric vehicles are devices with a maximum power of 1 kW and a maximum design speed of 25 km/h. When riding one, follow the rules for cyclists.

A self-balancing light electric vehicle that remains in balance even when the vehicle is not moving or has no driver may also be driven on the pavement. In that case the driver must give unobstructed passage to pedestrians.

Light electric vehicles must be fitted with a bell and reflectors. Use lights after dark or when visibility is poor.



The cyclist rules also apply to electrically assisted and powered bicycles with a maximum power of 1 kW and a maximum design speed of 25 km/h. The devices and their drivers are subject to the same equipment requirements as cyclists.



Pedestrian equipment

The law states that in general pedestrians are to use a reflector when it is dark. Reflector works by reflecting light back to its source. This means that drivers will be able to spot a pedestrian wearing a reflector from a good distance. Even in lighted urban areas it is difficult to detect pedestrians without a reflector in low-light circumstances or poor weather.

Wear reflectors on both sides. Wrists and ankles are good places for reflectors. A reflective vest or a freely swinging reflector can be seen from many directions. Remember to attach a reflector to prams, wheelchairs, rollators - even your dog.

In winter, using proper winter shoes and ice grips for shoes can help you avoid slipping.

Equipment for bicycles and cyclists

A safe bike is one that is the right size for the user and easy to ride.

When buying a bike, check that it has:

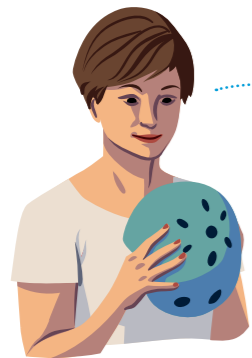
- Effective brakes.
- Reflectors. The bicycle must have front, rear and side reflectors.
- An audible warning device, such as a bell.
- Lights. In dark and dim conditions, or if visibility is poor, the law requires that cyclists

use both a front and a tail light. The front light must give out white light and the back light must be red. These lights can be attached to the bike or to the cyclist.

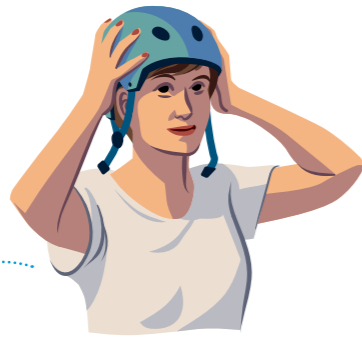
Service your bike regularly: clean it, lubricate the chains and check tyre pressure. Use winter tyres in winter conditions.

The Finnish Road Safety Council recommends cyclists to use bike lights in steady mode instead of flashing one.





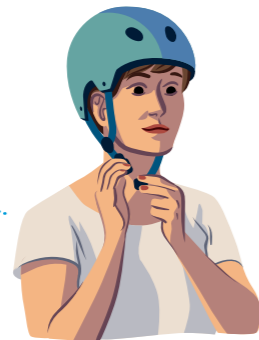
Choose a right sized helmet.



Make sure your forehead is covered when you put it on.



Tighten the adjustment band so that it is nicely tight.



Adjust the connecting points for the straps so that they are below your ears.



Tighten the chin strap so that your finger fits between the strap and your chin.

Wear a helmet

By law cyclists and bicycle passengers shall generally wear a protective helmet when driving. Even though wearing a helmet does not prevent accidents, in the event of one a helmet effectively protects the head from injuries. The most common type of a cycling accident is one where a cyclist falls over without any other party to the accident. Impact to the head often causes the most serious injuries.

A helmet should be of a suitable size and properly attached. If the straps are loose or the helmet is not worn correctly, the helmet will not protect the head as intended in an accident. If the helmet suffers an impact it must be replaced with a new one.

Wear a helmet also when riding an electric mobility device like an electric scooter.

Make sure that your helmet has the CE mark and the EN 1078 approval.



Transporting passengers by bicycle

Usually bicycles and light electric vehicles like electric scooters are designed to be used only by one person at a time. Don't carry more people than allowed.

When carrying a child on a bike, use a suitable child bike seat. A proper seat must be used

also when riding a cargo bike or towing an attached bike trailer. Use a safety belt if there is one.

When riding with a passenger, the bicycle must be equipped with two separate brakes. The passenger is in general also to wear a helmet.

Share the road safely

Pedestrians must use either the pedestrian path or the verge of the road. If there is no path or verge, the pedestrian must use the edge of the cycle path or the road.

Cyclists must use the cycle path if there is one for the direction in which they are travelling. A cycle path is always marked with a road sign. If there is no cycle path or a cycle lane, a cyclist rides on the verge of the right side of the road.

If there is no verge, cyclists ride as close to the right side of the road as safety allows. When riding on the road, cyclists must follow the same rules as other drivers.

Riding a bicycle on the pedestrian path is only permitted for children under the age of 12. When riding on the pedestrian path, unobstructed passage must be given to pedestrians.

! In general, pedestrian paths are not marked separately with a traffic sign.



Pedestrian path



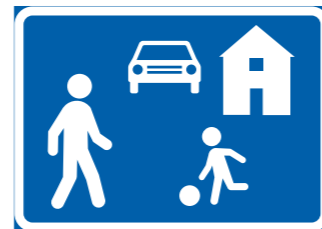
Divided path for pedestrians and cyclists



Shared path for pedestrians and cyclists



Pedestrian zone



Residential zone



On the road

As a pedestrian, if there is no pedestrian path, walk on the verge of the road. If there is no verge, walk on the left side of the road - unless the right side is safer for some reason. Cyclists ride as close to the right side of the road as safety allows. If there is no verge or it is in bad condition it might be necessary to ride a bit further from the side of the road.

Be seen: stand out from your surroundings by using gear made of reflective or fluorescent material. On the road ride one behind the other, not side-by-side.

Overtake a cyclist only when it can be done safely and with an adequate safety distance.



Divided path for pedestrians and cyclists

Pedestrians and cyclists have their own separate paths which are separated by a white line or the use of different lane coating materials.

The road sign indicates which side is for pedestrians and which side is for cyclists.

Cyclists must ride on the right-hand side of their own path. Pedestrians don't have a mandatory place so they can freely use any part of pedestrian path.



Shared path for pedestrians and cyclists

Pedestrians should use the left or the right side of the path. Cyclists ride on the right-hand side.

Look over your shoulder before overtaking to make sure the road is clear. Remember to pass others with a proper safety distance.



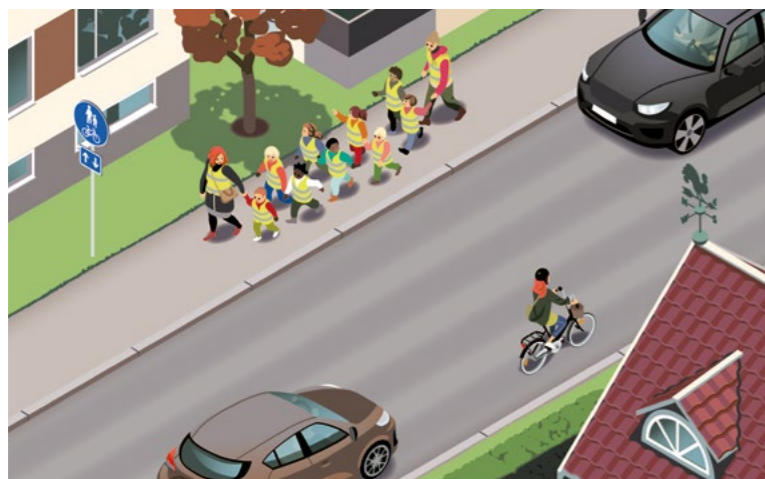
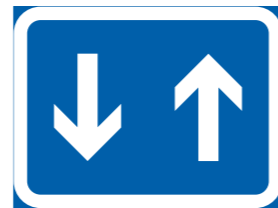
Take care when passing pedestrians and allow them plenty of room. If necessary, signal your intentions by ringing the bell.



Ride in the right direction

Take note that a cycle path can be one-way only.

Two-way cycle paths are to be marked by 1.6.2027 with the adjacent panel.



Sometimes a cycle path is only on the left side of the road. Then the cyclist can ride on the right verge or side of the road if it is more safer e.g. due to the route.



Cycle path

Keep to the right when riding on a cycle path. In an intersection, you should give way **to vehicles approaching from the right** unless there is a road sign indicating otherwise.

If there is no separate path for pedestrians, pedestrians may walk on the side of the cycle path.

Motor vehicles are only allowed on cycle paths in exceptional circumstances. Mopeds are sometimes allowed on cycle paths, but this must be indicated with an additional sign "Permitted for mopeds".



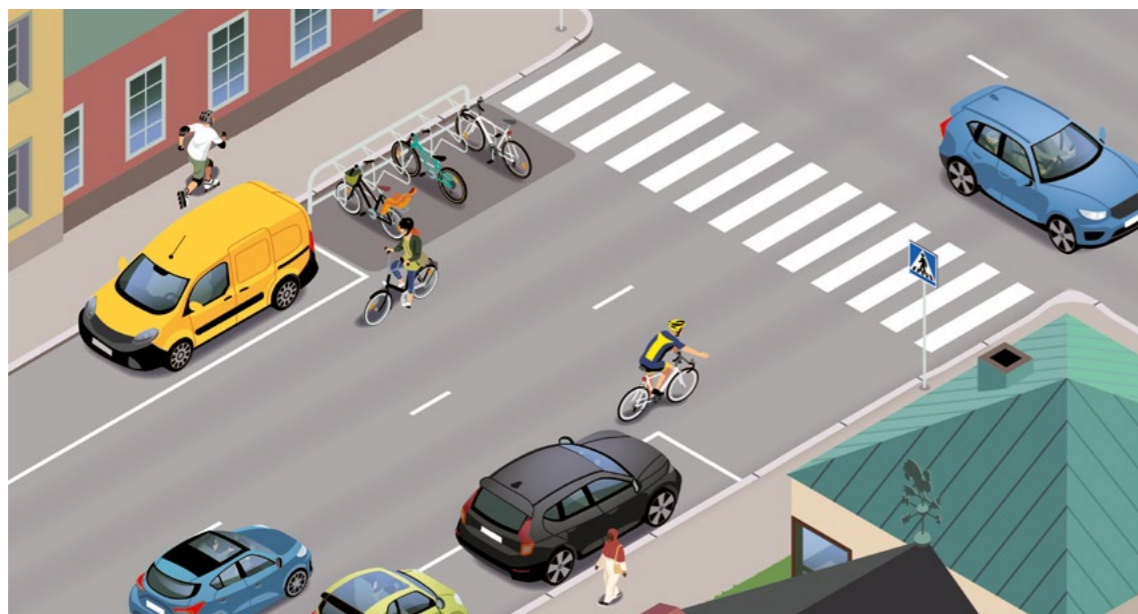


Cycling in the road

When cycling in the road, follow the same traffic rules as the car drivers.

Leave an empty space between you and parked cars so you won't get doored.

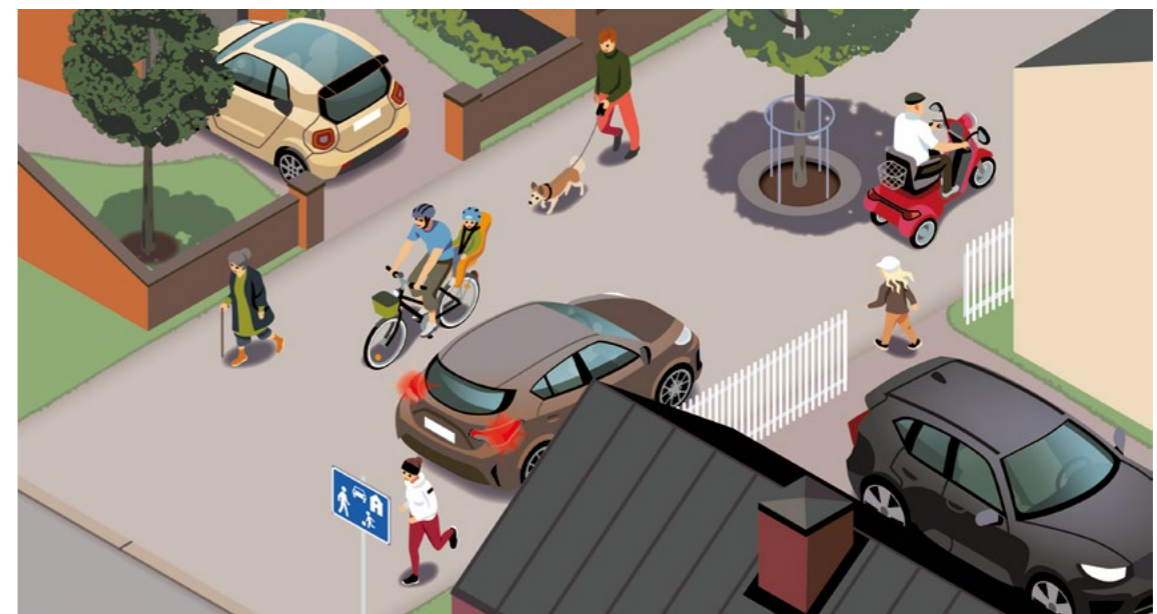
Ride as close to the right side of the road as safety allows.



Pedestrian & residential zones

When driving a vehicle on pedestrian or residential zones, speed must be adjusted to the pedestrians and cannot exceed 20 km/h.

All drivers and cyclists must give unobstructed access to pedestrians. Pay attention to others also as a pedestrian.

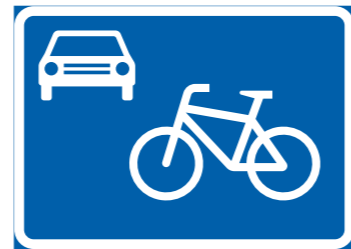




Bicycle street

A bicycle street is a street that accommodates both bicycle and motor vehicle traffic, but prioritizes the cyclists. Cars are allowed on a cycle street, but cyclists must be given unobstructed access and the driving speed must be adjusted to cycling speed. The speed limit on the cycle street is indicated with a separate sign.

For pedestrians there are separate pedestrian paths.



Cycle lane

Cycle lanes are separate lanes in the road marked with the cycle lane sign or road marking or both.

Riding on a cycle lane is subject to the same rules as riding on a road. Keep a good distance between yourself and parked cars so you don't get doored.



Cycle box

A cycle box is a waiting space reserved for cyclists at traffic lights.

Cyclists turning left at the intersection should position themselves on the left side of the cycle box, while those turning right should remain on the right-hand side.



One-way street

A one-way rule on streets and roads applies to both cyclists and motorists. On some streets the "one-way traffic" sign and/or the "no entry" sign may have an additional panel showing that it is permitted to cycle in both directions.

Cycle on your right. If you cycle in the opposite direction of cars, be extra careful when the one-way road comes to an end and at junctions to courtyards etc.

Cycling or walking may be prohibited with the use of certain road signs

Cycling prohibited:



Closed to all vehicles



No entry



No cycles



No cycles or mopeds



Footpath

An additional sign that allows cycling



Walking prohibited:



No pedestrians

Walking and cycling prohibited:



No pedestrians or cycles



No pedestrians, cycles or mopeds



Road for motor vehicles



Motorway



Crossing the road as a pedestrian

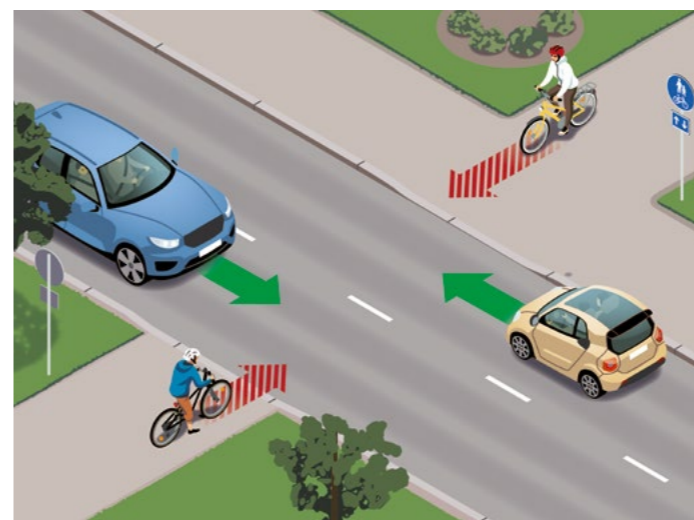
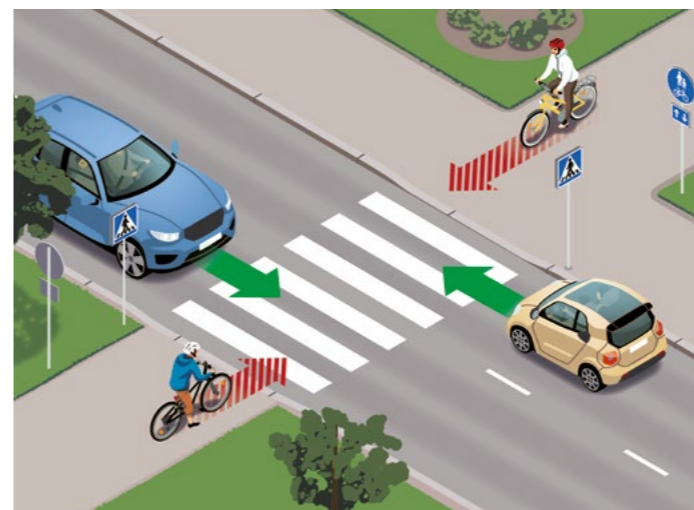
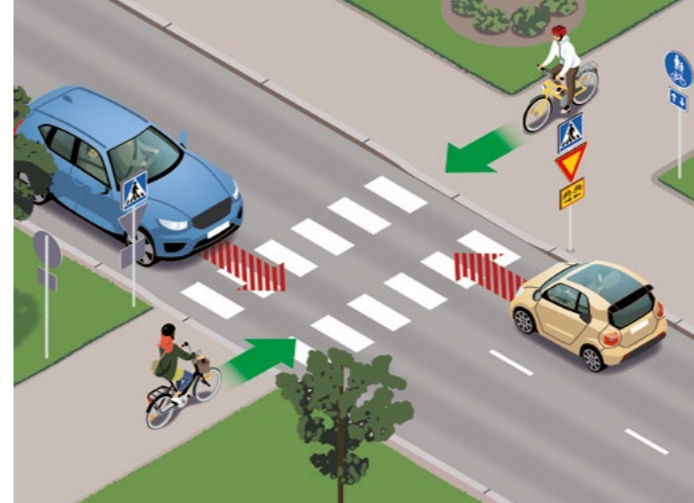
Cross the road via a zebra crossing or using a pedestrian underpass or overpass if one is nearby. Before crossing the road, make sure there are no vehicles close-by or that they have stopped or slowed down.

Drivers must give way to pedestrians who are on a zebra crossing or preparing to step onto one.



Crossing the road: traffic lights

Follow the traffic light signals. Wait your turn at the side of the road on your side of the path. Pay attention to other road users, and do not unnecessarily block the cycle path.



Crossing the road as a cyclist

The road crossing point for cyclists can be a designated crossing marked with road markings, a zebra crossing or a point with no markings at all.

A place for cyclists to cross a road can be indicated with a cycling path extension, a zebra crossing or there may be no markings on the road at all.

A cycling path extension is only marked if vehicles on the road are required to give way by one of the following signs: give way, stop or a give way to cycles sign.

If the obligation to give way has not been indicated with the previously mentioned road signs, the traffic rules determine who should give way at the intersection of a cycle path and a carriageway. At the intersection, a cyclist entering the road from a cycle path must give way to vehicles coming from both the left and the right. Regardless of this, vehicles must always give way to pedestrians, cyclists and moped riders who are crossing the street that the vehicle is turning onto.

Cyclists can cycle across the road using a zebra crossing. If the cyclists are walking their bikes across the zebra crossing, they are classified as pedestrians and motorists must give way to them.



Give way to road users coming from the right

No matter what vehicles are driven, you must give way at equal road junctions to vehicles approaching from the right.

Road crossing point for cyclists

The give way to cycles -sign obligates the drivers to give way to cyclists crossing the road on a structurally raised section.



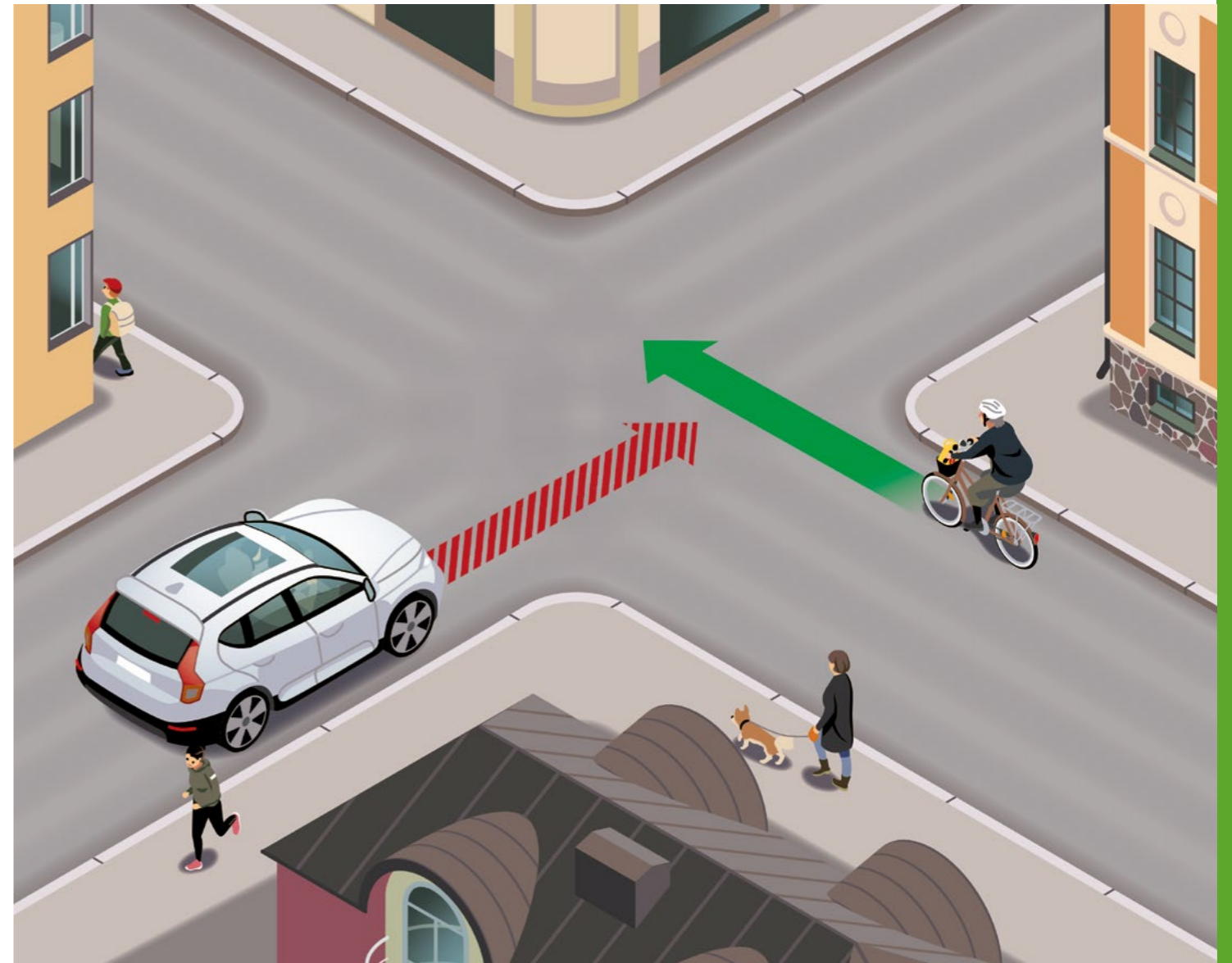
Obligation to give way to cyclists at a road crossing point (Give way for cycles sign)

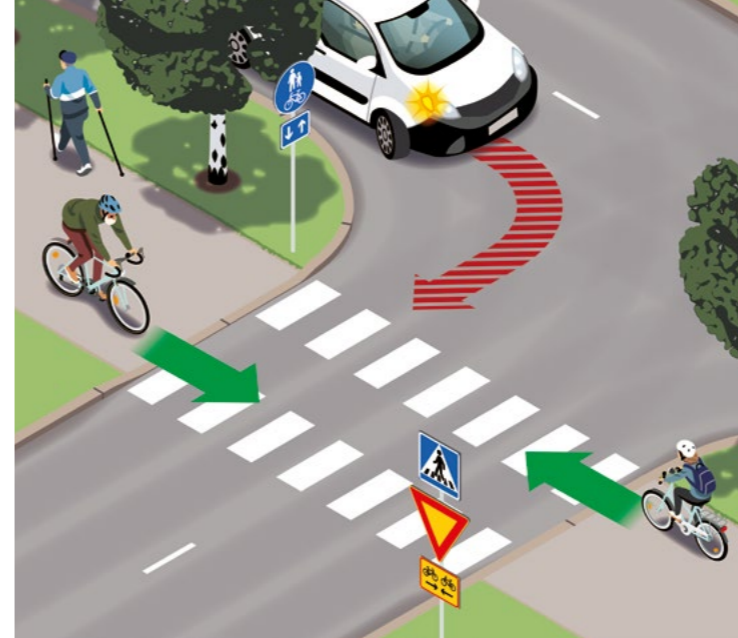
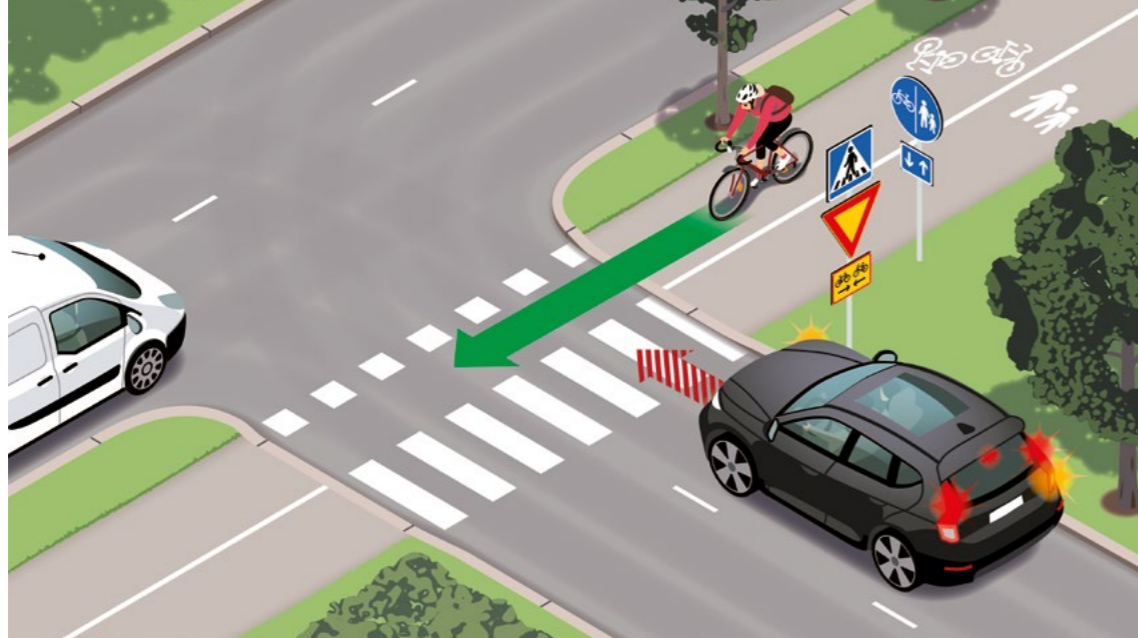


Obligation to give way at an intersection (give way sign)



Compulsory stopping and obligation to give way (stop sign)





The vehicle turning must give way

A turning vehicle must give way to pedestrians, cyclists and moped riders crossing the road.

Always take care when approaching an intersection.

Follow the road sign

Both give way sign and stop sign mean that at an intersection you must give way also to the cyclists crossing the road. As a cyclist, pay attention to vehicles turning right. As the driver's attention is on the traffic to the left, they might not notice a cyclist coming from the right.



Also as a cyclist, don't pass a stop sign without stopping or run a red light.



Exiting a courtyard

Give way to other road users whenever you enter the road from a courtyard, parking lot, residential zone etc.

Roundabout

Motorists entering and exiting a roundabout must give way to pedestrians, cyclists and moped riders who are crossing the road.





Signal before turning

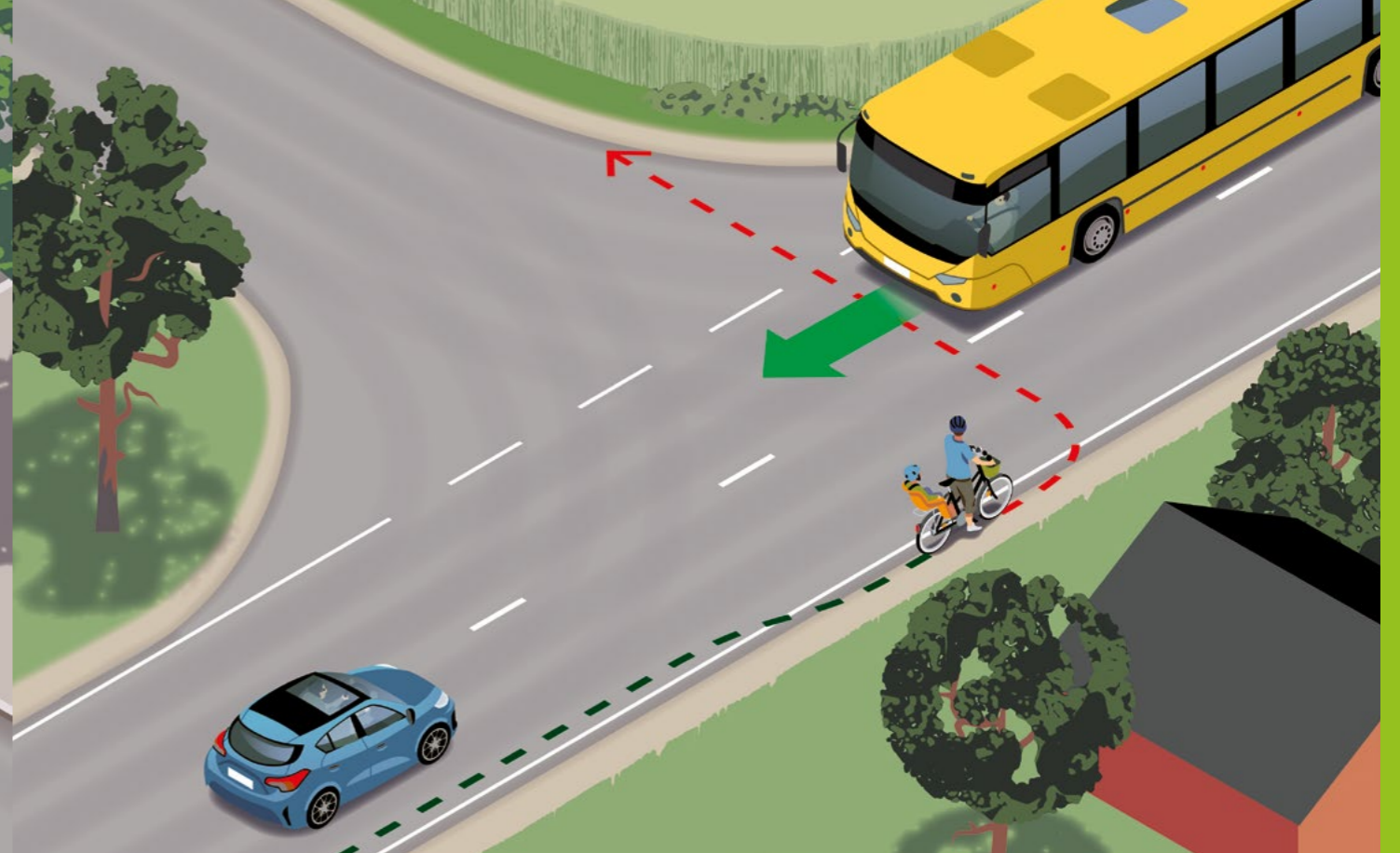
Communicate your intentions to other road users by signalling, adjusting your speed and road positioning.

When preparing to turn, look behind you and check your blind spot in case of approaching vehicles. Signal before turning.

Position yourself correctly on the road before turning. If you are turning right, position

yourself to the right. If you are turning left, signal and move to the centre of the road. Stop if necessary. Give way to oncoming traffic and pedestrians crossing the road on a zebra crossing.

As a cyclist you can also turn left using the so called two-step method shown on the next page.



Two-step method for turning left

When turning left in two steps, pass the intersection cycling on the right side of the road. Cross the road to the left when there is no traffic. Stop if necessary to check for vehicles coming behind you.

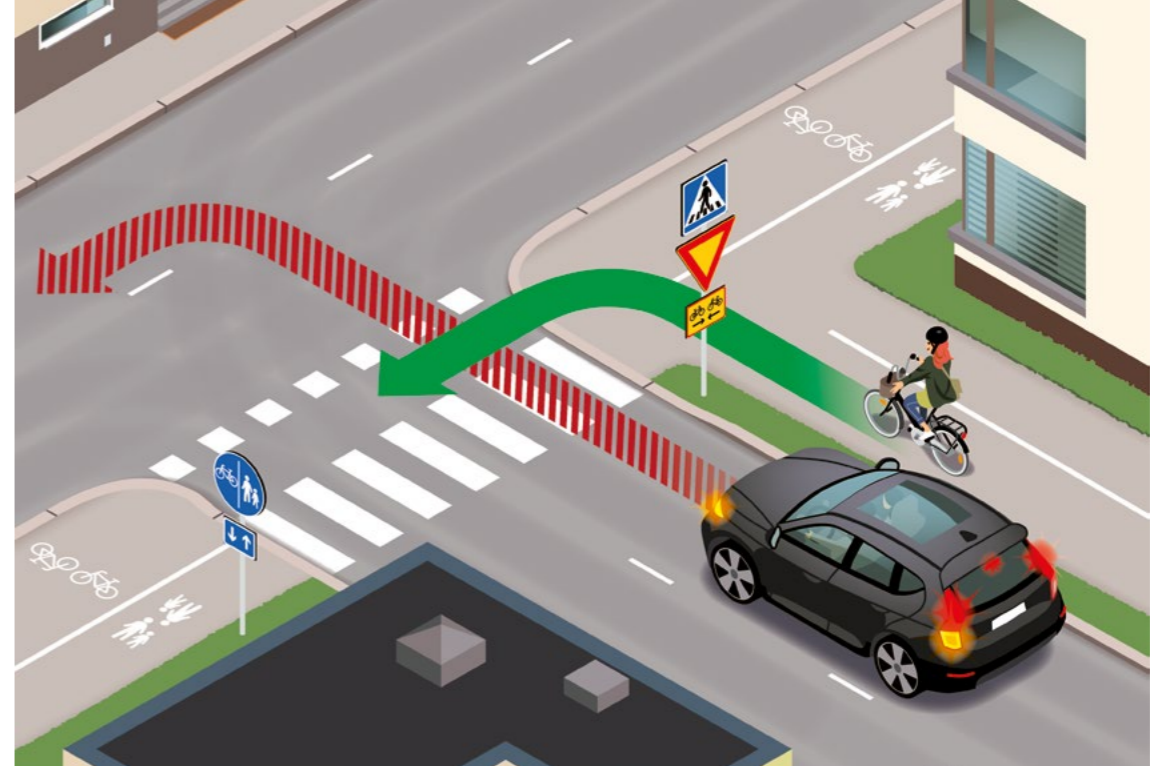
The two-step method is a safer option especially on roads with higher speed limits. Make sure to signal if you cross the road without stopping.



Stay sharp

Be extra vigilant at junctions when there is a lorry, a bus or other large vehicle. An HGV takes up a lot of space when turning and even with all the mirrors, there are still blind spots. Avoid riding along the inside of a large vehicle,

especially near a junction, even if there is a large gap between the vehicle and the kerb. Wait for your turn with an adequate safety distance.



Observe your surroundings

When turning, take notice of the vehicles coming from behind you. Signal your intentions

and make sure it is safe to turn by taking a look back over your shoulder.



Give way to passengers

A cyclist must give way to passengers getting on or off a bus.

Have a safe journey

By walking or cycling, you can increase your daily physical activity and achieve health benefits. It's also good for the environment. However, it is only healthy and economical if you stay safe. By anticipating, you can avoid many dangerous situations.

Road conditions and changes in traffic situations may present challenges even on familiar routes.
Set the right speed.

In winter, for example, darkness and slippery conditions often require reductions in speed. It can also be necessary to slow down if there are many other people on the road. Your speed may seem less safe to other road users than it does to you. We are sharing the roads with others, so let's act and react accordingly. Pay attention to others and make the roads a safer place for all.



Finnish Road Safety Council
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