

The Road User Rule Amendment 2009

There will be some changes to the Road User Rule coming into force on 1 November 2009. There are five that relate specifically to cyclists but, as road users, the others will affect you as well.

What is the Road User Rule?

The Road User Rule sets out requirements for the safe and efficient use of roads by road users (ie, drivers, riders, passengers, pedestrians and those leading or riding animals). The Rule is being amended with some changes that will come into force on 1 November 2009.

What changes will be made in the amendment Rule?

The key provisions in the amendment Rule are listed below. The ones specifically relating to cyclists are highlighted:

- 1) the ban on the use of hand-held mobile phones when driving
- 2) **the use of special vehicle lanes by vehicles not otherwise allowed on them**
- 3) the correct wearing of seatbelts
- 4) the use of headlamps on moped and motorcycles during the day
- 5) **allowing cyclists to make a hook turn**
- 6) the use of mopeds or motorcycles on footpaths by postal services
- 7) the rights and duties of users of mobility devices and wheeled recreational devices
- 8) **exemptions from arm signalling for cyclists at roundabouts**
- 9) towing speeds for vehicles without a rigid towing system
- 10) parking a vehicle on the road margin
- 11) child safety locks in taxis
- 12) the use of blue beacons on vehicles
- 13) pedestrians waiting at pedestrian crossings
- 14) passenger service vehicles at level crossings
- 15) the use of safety chains on light trailers
- 16) **requirements for cycle lights (must be visible for 100m)**
- 17) **priorities for use of shared paths by road users**
- 18) Road Controlling Authorities' marking of stopping places/stands
- 19) responsibility for the use of seat belts on buses

Some Q&As on the highlighted provisions follow:

- **Use of special vehicle lanes**

What is the Rule amendment relating to the use of special vehicle lanes?

When drivers need to cross a special vehicle lane to turn left or get to a parking space they must do it in the minimum length of the lane necessary but no more than 50 metres.

What is a special vehicle lane?

A special vehicle lane is a lane defined by signs and markings that is restricted to a specific class or classes of vehicles. They include bus lanes, transit lanes and cycle lanes.

How will road users know where 50m starts?

A distance of 50 metres is roughly equivalent to 10 car lengths.

What penalties will there be for those breaching this provision of the Rule?

The existing penalty for those using a special vehicle lane incorrectly will apply. This is an infringement fee of \$150.

- **Cyclists permitted to do a hook turn**

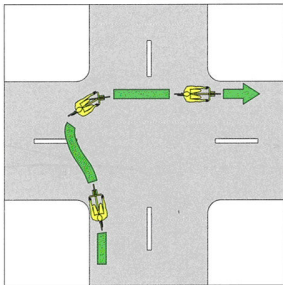
What is the Rule amendment relating to cyclists being permitted to do a hook turn?

Cyclists will now be permitted to do a hook turn at intersections when turning right unless there is a sign prohibiting the manoeuvre.

What is a hook turn?

A hook turn allows cyclists to turn right at intersections safely by:

- proceeding from the left-hand side of the road across part of the intersection to a point in the appropriate lane of the side road;
- then either waiting for a suitable gap on the through road or, where there are signals, waiting until the signals change to green; and,
- then proceeding across the intersection, effectively completing a right turn.



Why will the hook turn be permitted?

It is often difficult for cyclists, particularly those who are inexperienced or otherwise less able, to make a right turn at major junctions. In these circumstances they are often required to move from the extreme left of the approach road to the centre across two or more lanes of traffic.

- **Signalling requirements for cyclists at roundabouts**

What is the Rule amendment regarding signalling requirements for cyclists at roundabouts?

This Rule amendment provides an exception from arm (hand) signalling for cyclists at roundabouts where signalling is not practicable.

Why is this Rule amendment being made?

Roundabouts, particularly those that are multi-laned, can be difficult for cyclists to negotiate. This can be made more difficult if a cyclist attempts to comply with the signalling requirements set down in the previous rules.

The previous requirement was for a cyclist, intending to turn right, to signal as they approach a roundabout to continue to signal into the roundabout if they are turning right, and then signal left from the last exit before the one they intend to use until they leave the roundabout. This is not only physically demanding, but it also, potentially, places the cyclist at greater risk of losing control in an often-dangerous environment.

How would a cyclist indicate when turning right at a roundabout when the amendment is made?

Cyclists should still try to give other road users around them clear indication of their intentions. Wherever possible, cyclists should signal their intention to turn right as they enter the roundabout (on multi-lane roundabouts they will often be crossing a lane at this stage).

- **Requirements for cycle lights**

What is the Rule amendment relating to cycle lights?

This Rule amendment states that cycle lights must now be visible for 100 metres rather than be required to light the road up to 100m ahead.

Why is this Rule amendment being made?

Cycle lights rarely provide sufficient light in a downward direction to illuminate the road ahead. However, most modern lights are able to meet the requirement for being visible from a distance of 100 metres.

What penalties will there be for those breaching this provision of the Rule?

The amendment Rule will clarify the minimum performance required of a cycle headlamp. It does not change the existing requirement to use a vehicle's headlamp during the hours of darkness. The penalty for breach of that requirement is an infringement fee of \$150.

- **Priorities on shared paths**

What is the Rule amendment relating to shared paths?

This Rule amendment clarifies the responsibilities of users of shared paths.

Why is this Rule amendment being made?

With the increasing availability of shared paths, concern was expressed that users (cyclists, pedestrians, and riders of mobility devices and wheeled recreational devices) were not sure of their obligations.

Even though some users may have 'priority', no one can unreasonably impede the movement of other users.

What is a shared path?

A shared path means an area of road, separated from a roadway, that has been defined by the road controlling authority as a path to be shared by a specified range of road users which would typically, but not exclusively, include pedestrians, mobility devices, wheeled recreational devices and cycles.

What penalties will there be for those breaching this provision of the Rule?

New penalties are proposed, which depend on whether the offence is one that can be committed by a pedestrian or not.

It is proposed that existing penalties that apply to pedestrians will apply to use by a person of a shared path without care/inconsiderately/in hazardous manner and failure to give priority on a shared path. These are not infringement offences, and will be subject to a maximum fine of \$35 on summary conviction.

It is proposed that there will be an infringement fee of \$100 for a person who rides a cycle, mobility device or wheeled recreational device on a shared path at a hazardous speed.

Where can I find more information on the Road User Rule amendment?

More information on all the provisions in the Road User Rule can be found at <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/rules/index.html>