

# STREET CODE



Rules and Etiquette  
for Getting There  
Together

# KNOW THE CODE

The Street Code is a resource for everyone. Whether you walk, bike, drive, or use public transportation, you play an active role in the transportation system. In order for this system to function well, each person must **follow the rules**, **pay attention**, and **be patient** and **courteous**.

The Street Code is made up of five main sections, listed below. Together, these sections help everyone understand how to move through our city. This document ends with a resource page containing relevant phone numbers and websites.

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## ALWAYS YIELD TO PEDESTRIANS.



Let's give each other a break, be a little more patient, and remember that we are all trying to get somewhere safely. With more people biking and walking and with a constant flow of new students, new visitors, new drivers, new travelers, and new people on bikes, it's important to remember these **main themes** of the **Street Code**.

### 1. SLOW DOWN.

The faster you travel, the higher the risk of crash and serious injury. Slowing down is worth it because it's safer for everyone.

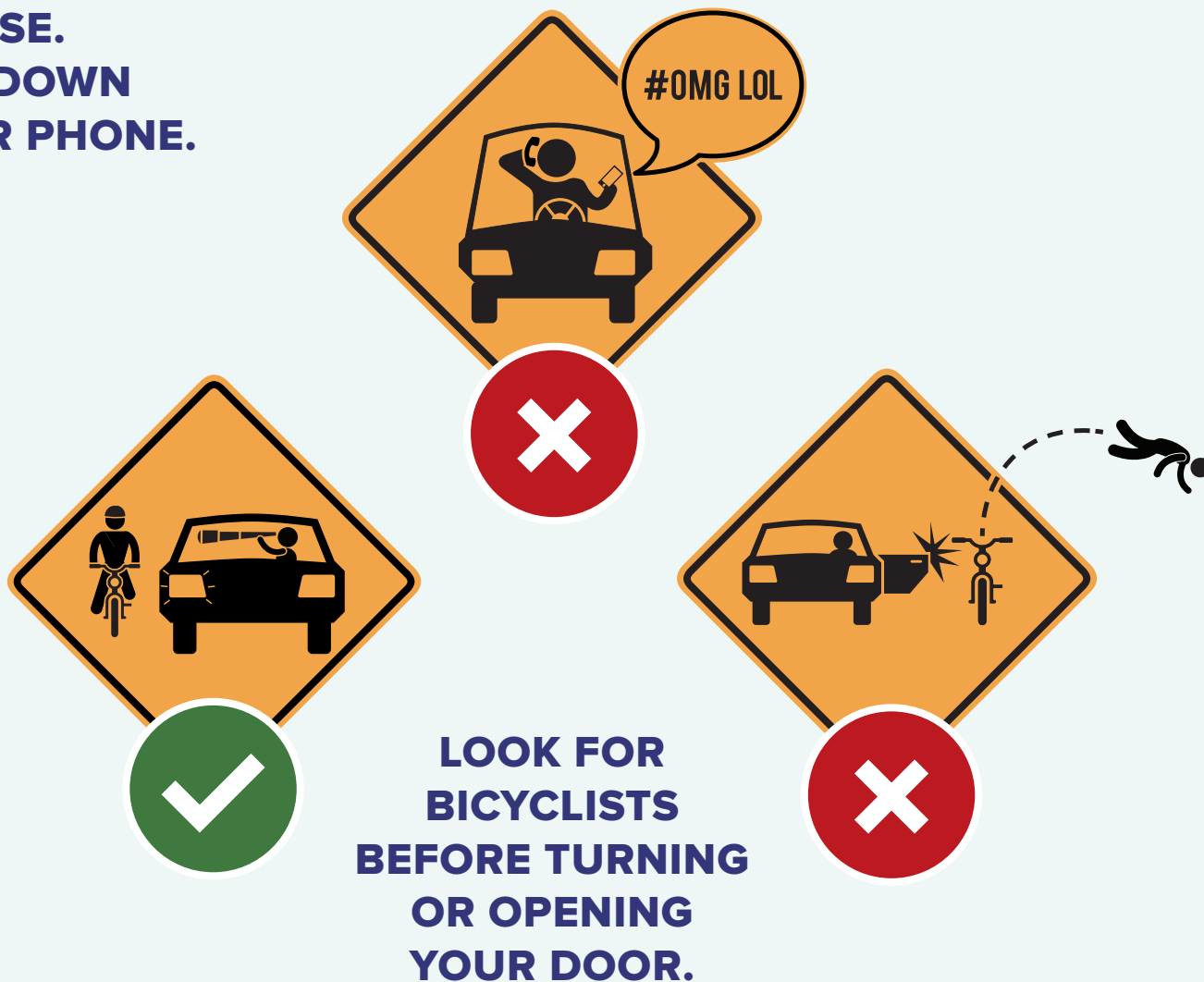
### 2. PUT YOURSELF IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES.

Imagine what it would feel like to be in their position. Maybe they are new to the city and are still learning where things are. Maybe they need more time crossing the street than you might. Perhaps they are new to driving or cycling in the city and are nervous. Be patient and considerate of others.

### 3. WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER.

It's about all of us. We are all trying to safely get somewhere. When we all do our part, we can go out into the world and move around safely and comfortably.

**PLEASE.  
PUT DOWN  
YOUR PHONE.**



# RULES OF THE ROAD

## PEOPLE DRIVING



- Must **STOP** at red lights and stop signs.
- Must **YIELD** to people in crosswalks.
- Must **NOT DRIVE, PARK, OR STOP** in a bike lane. This includes **RIDE-HAIL DRIVERS**.
- Must **LOOK FOR PEOPLE BIKING** before opening the door (**PASSENGERS** must also look before opening the door).
- Must **STOP BEHIND** the crosswalks and bike box **EVEN IF EMPTY**.
- Must **YIELD** (when turning or parking) to people biking who are going straight.
- Must **NEVER TEXT AND DRIVE** – it’s illegal and deadly!
- Must **NEVER** pass another vehicle stopped at a crosswalk.
- Must drive **AT LEAST 4 FEET** away from people biking, people walking, and other vulnerable road users.
- Are subject to being ticketed and fined for violating traffic laws.
- Citywide speed limit is 25 mph unless otherwise marked. Many city streets have a 20 mph speed limit.

## PEOPLE BIKING



- Must **STOP** at red lights and stop signs.
- Must **YIELD** to people in crosswalks.
- Must use **FRONT WHITE LIGHTS, REAR RED LIGHTS,** and **REAR REFLECTORS** between dusk and dawn.
- Must bike in the **SAME DIRECTION** as traffic unless otherwise marked or signed.
- Must **WEAR A HELMET** if 16 years of age or younger.



- May use the **FULL CAR LANE** anywhere, any time, and on any street (except limited access highways) **EVEN IF THERE IS A BIKE LANE.**
- May use a **BUS LANE** unless otherwise indicated.
- May **NOT** ride on the **SIDEWALK** in designated business districts.
- May pass vehicles on the right and move to the front of the intersection at stop lights.
- May **NOT** wear headphones or earbuds in both ears while biking.
- Are subject to being ticketed and fined for violating traffic laws.
- Don't text and bike. Hands on your bike and eyes on the road.
- **PEOPLE BIKING ON EBIKES MUST** follow the same rules and regulations as traditional bikes. The only exception is that people biking on ebikes **MUST NEVER RIDE ON SIDEWALKS.**

## PEOPLE WALKING



- Should be mindful of the flow of traffic and, where available, use the crosswalk and wait for the pedestrian signal.
- Should stay on the sidewalk when waiting to cross. Do not wait in the bicycle lane.

## PEOPLE USING PUBLIC TRANSIT



- Must give up seats labeled **PRIORITY SEATING**, as required by federal law, if someone who is pregnant, elderly, or disabled needs to sit down.
- Should exit through the **BACK DOOR** of the bus when possible.

# BUS LANES

**Bus lanes** make bus routes more **reliable** and make bus trips **faster**.

**People driving and biking** must stop at the stop line so that people walking can cross the intersection safely.

**People driving must not** park, load, stop or drive in a bus lane **except** to make a right turn, enter or exit a driveway, or to access a designated parking spot.

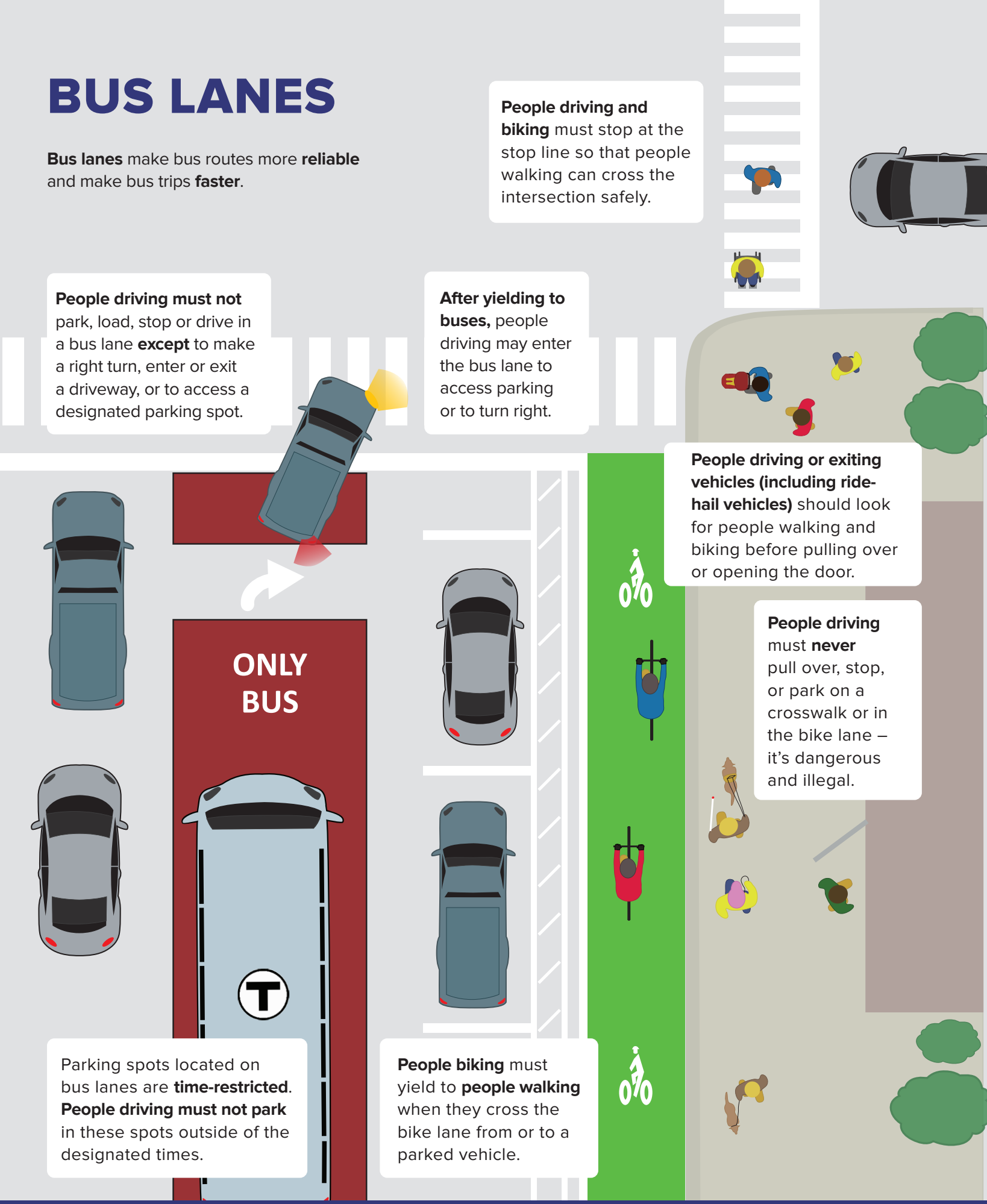
**After yielding to buses**, people driving may enter the bus lane to access parking or to turn right.

**People driving or exiting vehicles (including ride-hail vehicles)** should look for people walking and biking before pulling over or opening the door.

**People driving must never** pull over, stop, or park on a crosswalk or in the bike lane – it's dangerous and illegal.

Parking spots located on bus lanes are **time-restricted**. **People driving must not park** in these spots outside of the designated times.

**People biking** must yield to **people walking** when they cross the bike lane from or to a parked vehicle.





# REDUCE RISK: BE ALERT

## PEOPLE DRIVING



- Watch for people biking coming from behind, especially when turning.
- Before opening your car door or moving, **LOOK IN YOUR MIRROR** and physically **TURN YOUR BODY** to make sure no people on bikes are coming.
- Pay attention to the **PEDESTRIAN SIGNAL** and give people walking the right-of-way.
- Allow room for people biking to pass on your right; **DON'T DRIVE TOO CLOSE TO THE CURB.**

## PEOPLE BIKING



- Understand that large vehicles make wide turns, take time to come to a full stop, and have large blind spots.  
**GIVE BUSES, TRUCKS, AND OTHER LARGE VEHICLES ROOM AND AVOID PASSING THEM.**
- Put your phone away – your safety depends on all of your senses.
- Pedestrians are everywhere – be prepared to stop for them.
- Ride outside of the “door zone” (at least **3 FEET** from parked cars) and watch for any opening car doors.
- When passing vehicles on the right in heavy traffic, **SLOW DOWN** as you approach a crosswalk. People may be crossing.
- Anticipate bus stops to avoid conflicts with a bus. Don't pass buses on the right – you might hit someone exiting the bus or you could get squeezed into the curb.



## PEOPLE WALKING



- **LOOK UP** from your phone when you cross the street.
- Look for people biking before stepping out into the crosswalk – they can travel **MUCH FASTER** than vehicles in times of heavy traffic.
- Look for people biking when entering ride-hail vehicles.
- Watch for turning vehicles before crossing.
- Be aware of your surroundings especially if listening to music or talking on the phone.

## PEOPLE USING PUBLIC TRANSIT



- Watch for vehicles and people biking when exiting the bus and crossing the street.



# DOORS ARE DANGEROUS

Vehicle doors pose a very serious threat to people biking. Whether you are the driver or a passenger, look before opening a car door — it could save someone’s life.

**People driving or riding in cars, trucks, taxis, or any other motor vehicle with a door:**

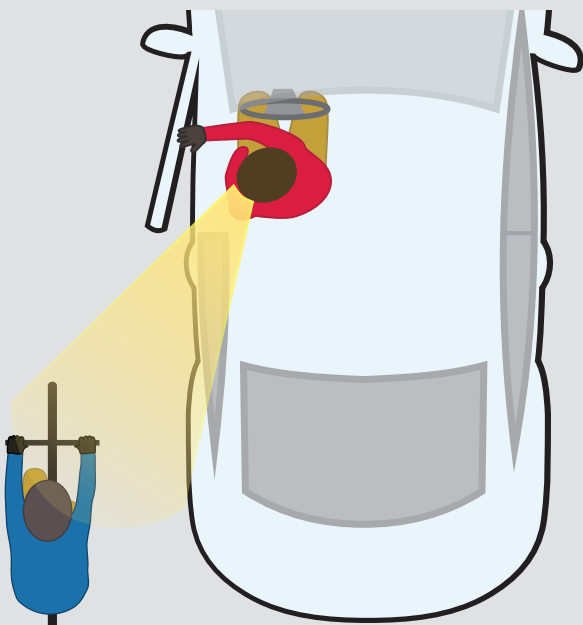
**1** Check your **rear-view mirror**.



**2** Check your **side-view mirror**.

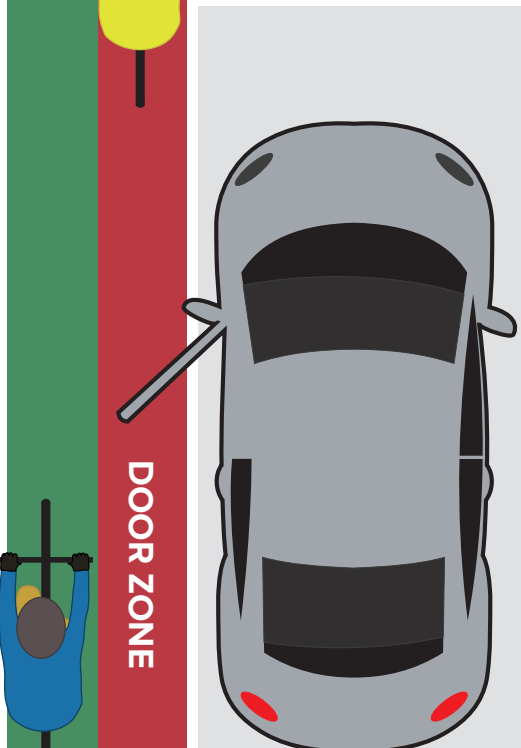
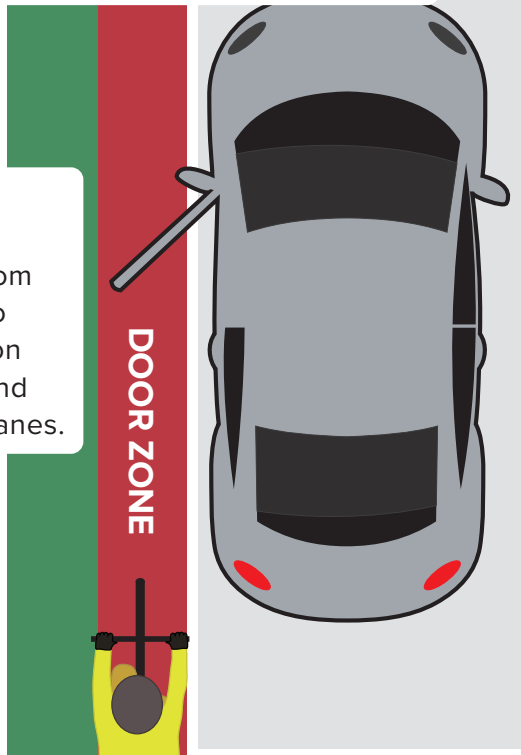


**3** Open the door with your **far hand**. The “Dutch Reach” forces your body to turn, making it a habit to look behind them for approaching cars or people on bikes.



**People biking should ride outside of the “door zone.”**

**People biking** should ride at least 3 feet from parked cars to avoid doors, on streets **with** and **without** bike lanes.



# REDUCE RISK: BE PREDICTABLE

Taking risks while driving a vehicle, riding a bike, or crossing the street impacts others around you. Communicating your actions and making yourself predictable helps keep everyone safe. Most importantly: **people driving and people biking, please slow down.**

## PEOPLE DRIVING



- Communicate – **USE YOUR TURN SIGNAL!**
- Give plenty of notice before turning or changing lanes – sudden movements can cause a crash.
- Stay at least **4 FEET AWAY** from people biking when passing.
- Return to the right lane when you have safely passed any people biking.
- If a lane is too narrow to pass people biking, you must use another lane to pass or otherwise wait until it is safe to pass.
- **DO NOT DRIVE ONTO THE BIKE LANE** to pass a car waiting to turn left at an intersection without a left turning lane.

## PEOPLE BIKING



- Ride in a **STRAIGHT LINE** so that people walking and driving know where to expect you.
- **COMMUNICATE** when passing other people on bikes, turning, or slowing down. Use your arm, voice, or bell.
- Pass other people biking on the **LEFT**, not the RIGHT.

## PEOPLE WALKING



- 
- Make yourself visible — pause and **MAKE EYE CONTACT** with people driving cars and riding bikes before crossing the street.
  - Walk in a **PREDICTABLE PATH** across the intersection.
  - Stay to the **RIGHT** on shared paths.

## PEOPLE USING PUBLIC TRANSIT



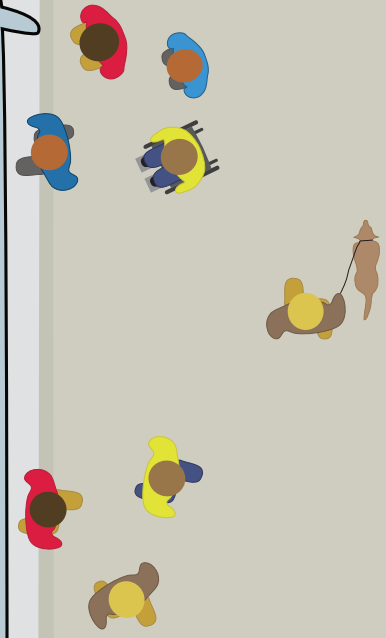
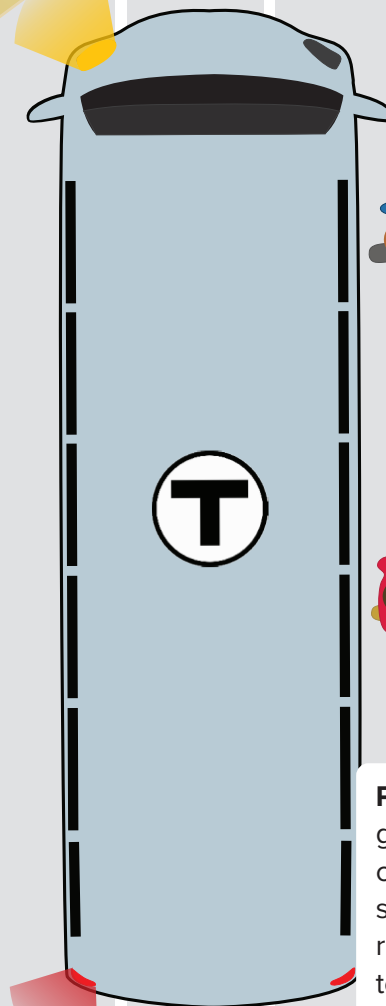
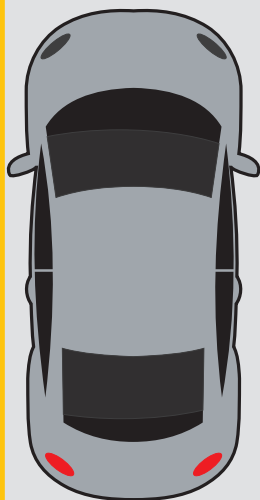
- 
- Should cross at the nearest crosswalk.
  - Never cross in front of the bus — wait for the bus to pass.
  - Even if you are in a rush, watch for people walking or biking, and wait to cross intersections when they are clear.

# BE CAREFUL AROUND BUSES

**Everyone** should be careful around buses. Expect buses to stop frequently and know they require great care to be operated safely. Be courteous, give buses enough space to maneuver, and watch for **people!**

**People biking** who choose to pass a bus should take the lane and pass on the left. Watch for people who may be entering the crosswalk.

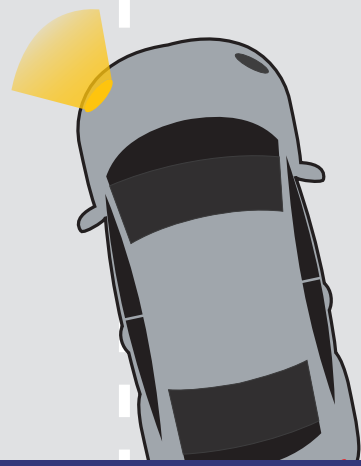
**People walking** should wait for the pedestrian signal before crossing.



**People biking** should **pay attention** when passing a bus—expect it to re-enter the travel lane.

**People biking** should give buses plenty of room. Don't try to squeeze by buses on the right. Sometimes it's best to hang back and let buses re-enter the travel lane instead of trying to pass. Watch for **cars** approaching on your left.

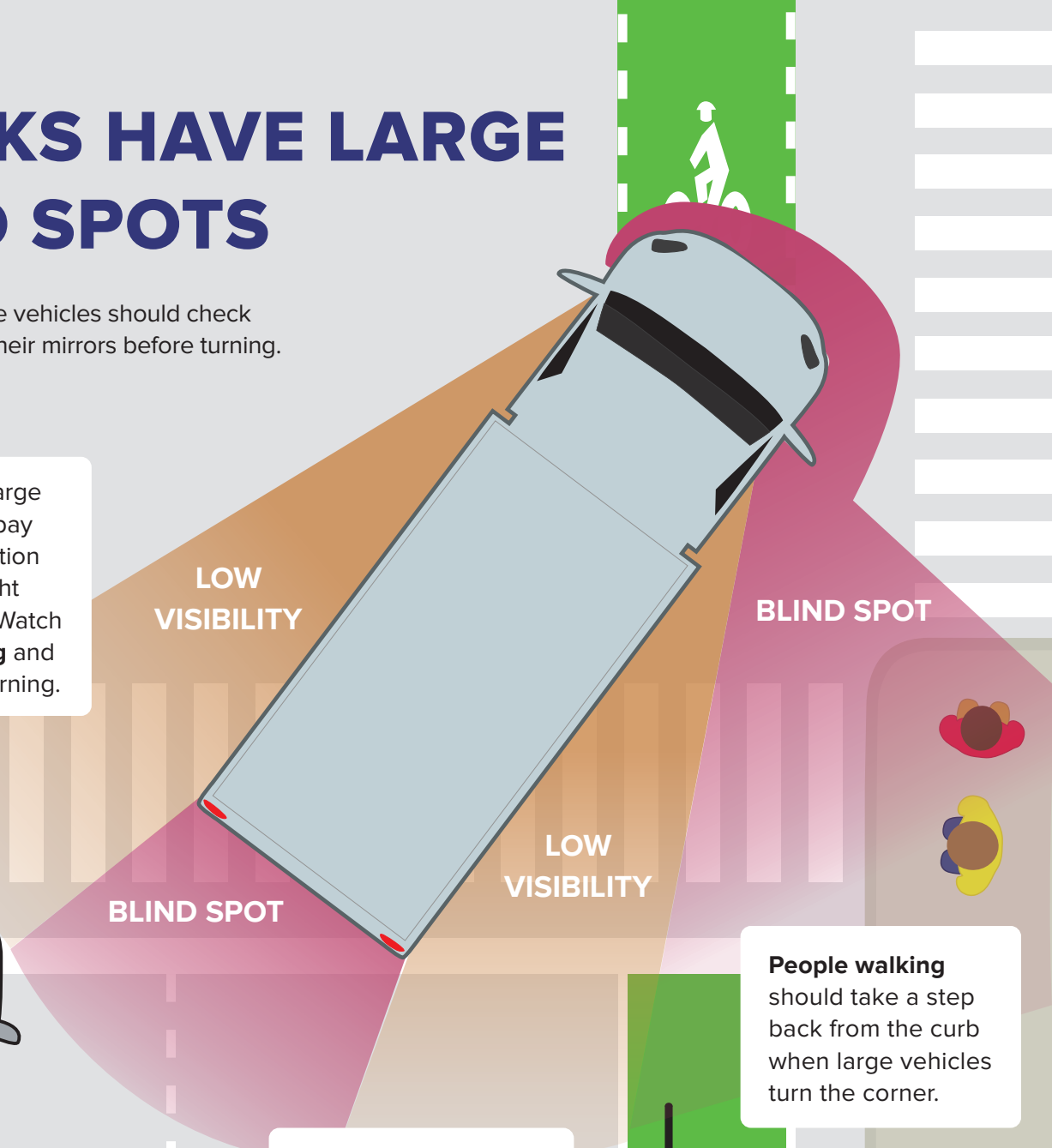
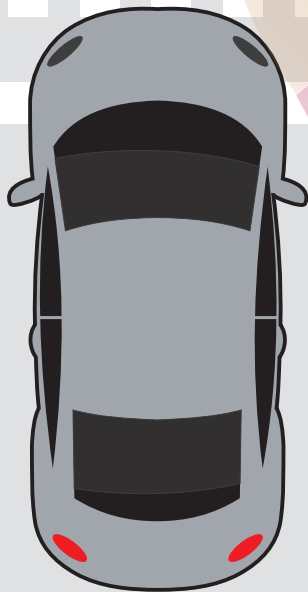
**People driving** should leave enough space for buses to re-enter the travel lane. Watch for **people on bikes** who may take up the full lane.



# TRUCKS HAVE LARGE BLIND SPOTS

**People driving** large vehicles should check and double-check their mirrors before turning.

**People driving** large vehicles should pay extra close attention when making right turns in the city. Watch for **people biking** and **walking** when turning.

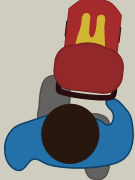


Avoid riding next to trucks and large vehicles.

**People walking** should take a step back from the curb when large vehicles turn the corner.

**People driving** should be mindful that large trucks require more time to stop. Don't cut in front of them if there isn't enough room.

**People biking** should be mindful of a vehicle's rear blind spot when taking the lane. Don't assume the **person driving** can see you.



# RESPONSIBILITY

We have a responsibility to **follow the rules** and **set a good example**. It's not just about you; we are all in this together.

## PEOPLE DRIVING



- Vehicles have the potential to inflict the most harm. **BE CAREFUL, PAY ATTENTION**, and slow down.
- **STOP** behind the **STOP LINE** or **BIKE BOX**. You won't get to your destination any faster by blocking the crosswalk or the bike box.
- When **TURNING RIGHT ON RED** is allowed, **LOOK** for **PEOPLE WALKING** on the crosswalk **IN FRONT OF YOU** and for **PEOPLE WALKING** on the crosswalk **TO YOUR RIGHT**. Turn **SLOWLY** only when both crosswalks are clear of **PEOPLE WALKING**.
- Being on the road requires all your attention – don't pick up your cell phone, even at a red light.

## PEOPLE BIKING



- Running red lights and stop signs without stopping is **DANGEROUS** and **ILLEGAL**. Show some respect – **STOP** and **PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN**.
- Be courteous of other people biking who are stopped at an intersection. **WAIT YOUR TURN** – you wouldn't cut to the front of the grocery store line, so don't cut in front of other people on bikes.
- Use **LIGHTS** at **NIGHT**. Wear bright or reflective clothing. It's not only about seeing where you are going, it's about others seeing **YOU**.
- Ride in the **SAME DIRECTION AS TRAFFIC**, unless otherwise marked. It's not worth the risk; take the extra time to ride correctly and predictably.



## PEOPLE WALKING



- Move off the shared path if you need to stop – **KEEP THE PATH CLEAR** for others.

## PEOPLE USING PUBLIC TRANSIT



- After entering the train or bus, **MOVE AWAY FROM THE DOOR** and make room for others behind you.
- Allow people to exit buses and trains before you board. You will have plenty of time to get on once they get off.
- Exiting through the rear door of the bus speeds up the ride for **ALL!**

# TURNING TRACTOR TRAILERS

Tractor trailers require much more room to make a right turn than you might expect.

**Everyone** should give them plenty of room and **people biking** should **NEVER** try to squeeze by them on the right.

As tractor trailers prepare to make a right turn, they may move into the left travel lane.

Path of Front Outside Tractor Tire

Path of Inside Trailer Tire

**People biking** should **NEVER** pass a moving tractor trailer on the right.

**People walking** should take a step away from the curb when large trucks turn. If the driver misjudges the turn, the rear wheels of the trailer could run over the curb.

Understand that it takes great care to drive a large vehicle safely. **People biking** should give buses, trucks, and other large vehicles plenty of room to maneuver.

# INTERSECTION SAFETY

People-friendly cities are walkable, bikeable, and full of activity. Whether in residential areas or business districts, parked cars can block your view at intersections. Be mindful: **slow down** and **double check** before proceeding through an intersection.

**People biking** should assume the person driving cannot see them. **Slow down** and try to make **eye contact** with the driver.

**People driving** should stop behind the line. Assume that a person biking is approaching. Carefully inch forward until you can see that it's clear.

**People walking** should cross in the crosswalks where you are expected and can be seen. Try to make **eye contact** with drivers and people on bikes before crossing.

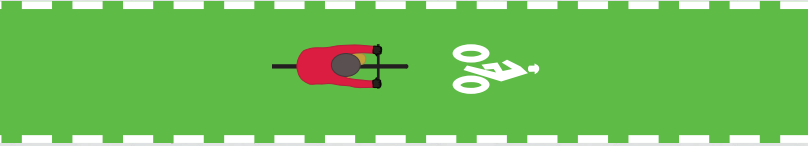
**People driving** should never pull over, stop, or park next to the crosswalk — it's illegal and it blocks people's views at intersections.

Pay attention to the **person biking** ahead of you. Give them plenty of space at intersections.

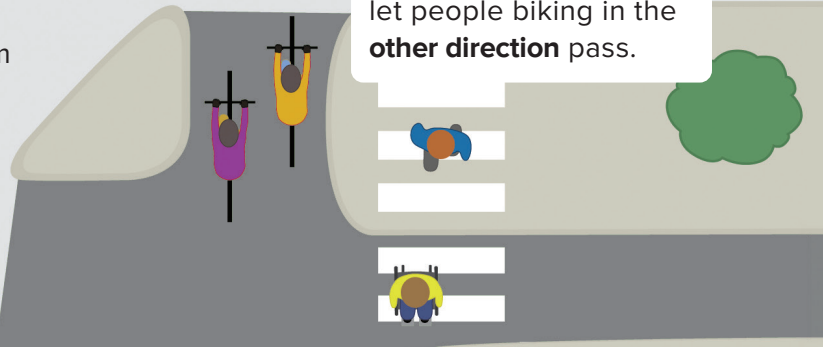
**Always** park within the designated parking space.

# PROTECTED INTERSECTIONS

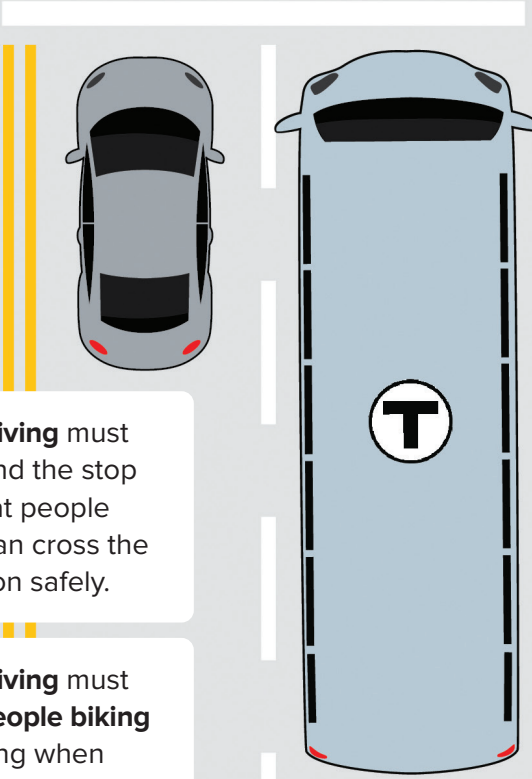
**Protected intersections** keep **people biking** separate from **people driving** and create shorter crossing distances for **people walking**. **People driving** benefit by seeing people biking better, especially when people driving turn right.



**People biking** should stop and wait to cross in the waiting area. They should also keep the other bike lane clear to let people biking in the **other direction** pass.



**People biking** must yield to **people walking** who are crossing the street and the bike lane.



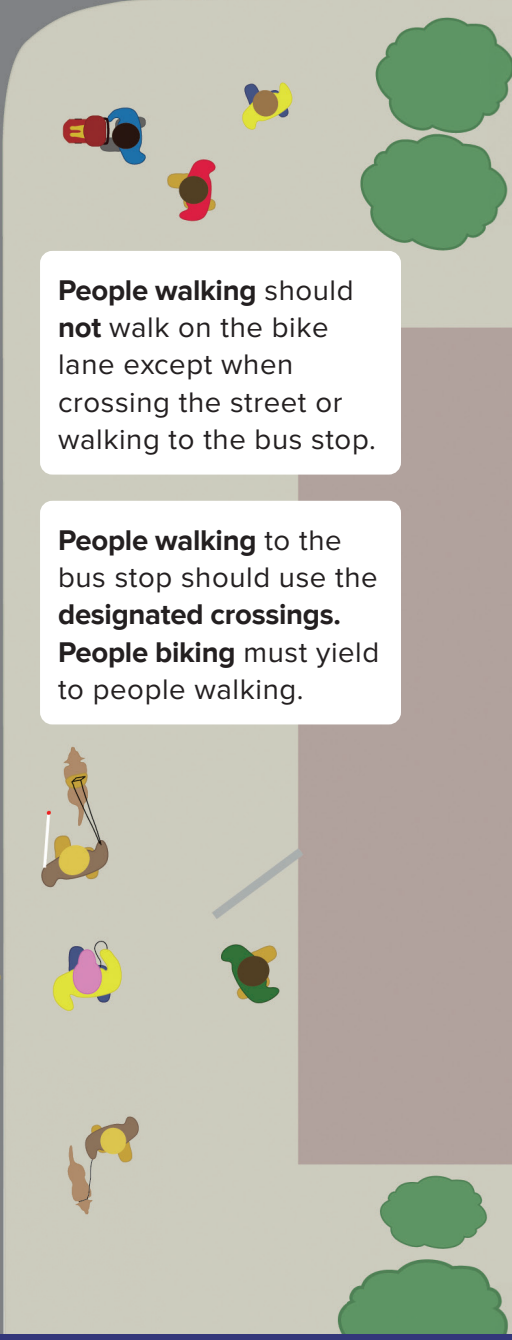
**People driving** must stop behind the stop line so that people walking can cross the intersection safely.

**People driving** must yield to **people biking** and walking when turning right.

**People biking** must yield to **people walking** who are crossing the bike lane to reach the bus stop.

**People walking** should **not** walk on the bike lane except when crossing the street or walking to the bus stop.

**People walking** to the bus stop should use the **designated crossings**. **People biking** must yield to people walking.



# SHARED PATH ETIQUETTE

Shared paths are used by many different people in many different ways. Follow these guidelines of how to share the path and enjoy your trip!

**Everyone** should keep to the **right** of the path.

Pass on the **left** and make your presence known. Check behind you before passing.

*On your left!*

**Slow down** when passing and give a **warning**.

Keep your dog on a **leash**.

Kindly move off of the path to stop and talk.

Be aware of your surroundings when running with ear buds in. Check behind you before passing.

Slower-moving people stay to the **right**. Use lights when it's dark.

Wear a light when it's dark.

# RESPECT OTHERS

**Be courteous and patient.** We all deserve to safely get where we need to be.

## PEOPLE DRIVING



- Don't honk unnecessarily at people biking and walking. It's loud and it's rude.
- Be patient when the light turns green – **ALLOW PEOPLE BIKING AND WALKING TO CLEAR THE INTERSECTION BEFORE GOING.**
- Watch for puddles when it rains. Slow down to **AVOID SPLASHING** someone walking, biking, or using a bus.

## PEOPLE BIKING



- Yield to people walking and give them the right of way.
- Make your presence known as you pass. Say “On your left,” “Passing,” or just ring your bell.
- Give other people biking some room – **DON'T CROWD!**
- Ride at **APPROPRIATE SPEEDS** on shared paths and on streets. Slow down when approaching others.
- If you choose to ride on sidewalks where it's legal to do so, you **MUST** ride at a walking speed and yield to people walking.

## PEOPLE WALKING



- 
- Don't cross against the light.
  - Keep your dogs on **SHORT LEASHES** when using a shared path.
  - Make sure kids **STAY RIGHT** when using a **SHARED PATH**.

## PEOPLE USING PUBLIC TRANSIT



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- Keep phone calls and conversations to a **LOW** volume.
  - Listening to music? **USE YOUR HEADPHONES**.
  - Don't put your bags on the seat next to you.

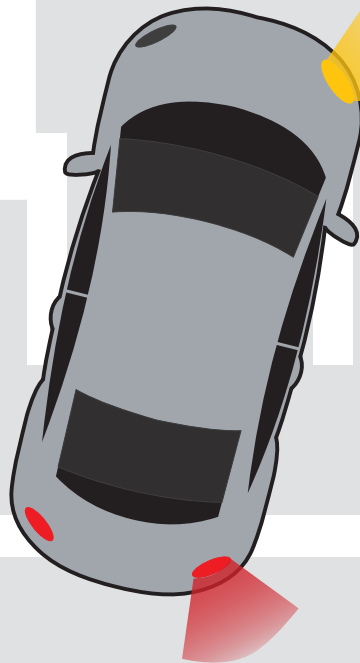




# CHECK BEFORE TURNING

It's important to check your mirrors and double-check your blind spots before turning. **People turning** must yield to **people biking** straight through an intersection.

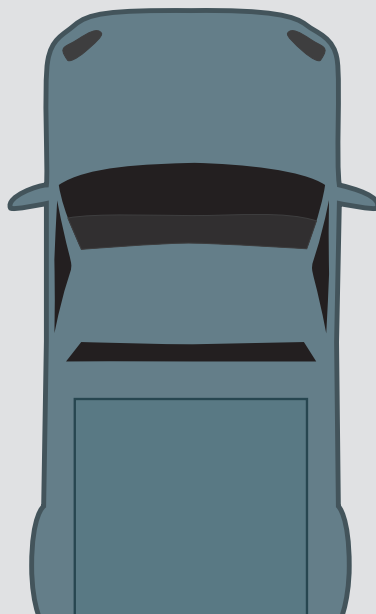
**People driving** should watch for **people biking** when approaching intersections. Wait for them to pass before turning. Be patient — don't try to cut in front of a **bicyclist**.



Say thank you. A little bit of gratitude goes a long way!



Do not cross the center lines to pass a turning vehicle at intersections. It's dangerous and illegal.



Be courteous when biking through an intersection. **Don't** try to race by a **person driving**. Maintain a safe speed to reduce the chance of a crash.

Be alert and anticipate when **people driving** may turn. Give vehicles plenty of space at intersections. Drivers may not see you coming.







# CAMBRIDGE RESOURCES

## MAKE A CALL

Emergency . . . . .	9-1-1
Police Non-Emergency . . . . .	617-349-3300
Community Development Department . . . . .	617-349-4600
Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department . . . . .	617-349-4700
Department of Public Works . . . . .	617-349-4800
Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) . . . . .	617-626-1250
MassDOT (Department of Transportation) . . . . .	77-MA-DOT-GOV
MBTA . . . . .	617-222-3200



## SUBMIT A REPORT

Use [Commonwealth Connect App](#) or [Online](#) form to report:

- Street Defect or Pothole
- Abandoned Bicycle
- Taxi Complaint
- Sidewalk Defect
- Bike Rack Request
- Traffic Sign Complaint
- Streetlight Defect
- Damaged Bike Rack
- Traffic Signal Complaint



[www.commonwealthconnect.io](http://www.commonwealthconnect.io)

To report a vehicle parked in a bike lane call [617-349-3300](tel:617-349-3300) or [617-349-4700](tel:617-349-4700).

## FIND OUT MORE

**Massachusetts Bicycle laws:**  
[malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws](http://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws)  
Part I, Title XIV, Chapter 85, Section 11B

**Cambridge Traffic regulations:**  
[cambridgema.gov/traffic/aboutus/trafficregulations](http://cambridgema.gov/traffic/aboutus/trafficregulations)

**Biking in Cambridge:**  
[cambridgema.gov/bikes](http://cambridgema.gov/bikes)

**Designated Business Districts:**  
[cambridgema.gov/CDD/factsandmaps/mapgalleries/transportation](http://cambridgema.gov/CDD/factsandmaps/mapgalleries/transportation)

**Cambridge Bike WikiMap**  
[cambridgema.gov/CDD/Transportation/bikesincambridge/bicyclerikemap](http://cambridgema.gov/CDD/Transportation/bikesincambridge/bicyclerikemap)

**Vision Zero:**  
[cambridgema.gov/visionzero](http://cambridgema.gov/visionzero)

**Walking in Cambridge:**  
[cambridgema.gov/CDD/Transportation/gettingaroundcambridge/byfoot](http://cambridgema.gov/CDD/Transportation/gettingaroundcambridge/byfoot)

**MBTA:**  
[mbta.com](http://mbta.com)

**Bluebikes:**  
[bluebikes.com](http://bluebikes.com)

