



Changes to the Ohio Revised Code's Bicycle Laws Effective September 21, 2006

House Bill 389, The Better Bicycling in Ohio bill, results in the changes detailed below:

4511.07 Local Traffic Regulations and 4511.711 Driving on a Sidewalk

Continues to allow local authorities to regulate the operation of bicycles as long as such regulation is not inconsistent with the uniform rules of the road prescribed in Ohio law. In general, local authorities may not prohibit the use of bicycles on any public street or highway. Local authorities may prohibit but not require bicycle riding on sidewalks

4511.22 Slow Speed.

Current Ohio law prohibits operating a vehicle at such an unreasonably slow speed as to impede or block the normal flow of traffic. Now the courts must take into consideration the capabilities of the vehicle and its operator in deciding if an infraction has been committed.

4511.25 Lanes of Travel upon Roadways

The law removes references to the curb or edge of road and instead requires slow moving vehicles to remain far enough right to allow others to pass if passing is safe and reasonable. Other exceptions: allows bicyclists to ride out of the curb lane when preparing for a left turn; when continuing straight when a right-turn-only lane is present; when the curb lane is blocked, and when overtaking and passing another vehicle traveling in the same direction. Clarifies that operators of slow moving vehicles are not required to compromise their safety in order to allow a faster vehicle to pass. See also 4511.55 below.

4511.31 Hazardous Zones

Allows for the crossing of a double yellow line in instances when drivers are approaching a slower vehicle (bicycles, horse-drawn buggies, farm vehicles, etc.) proceeding at less than half of the posted speed, as long as the faster vehicle is capable of passing without exceeding the speed limit and as long as there is sufficient clear space in which to do so.

4511.39 Turning and Stop Signals

Bicycle riders must now make a turn signal at least one time, but it need not be continuous. The bicyclist is not required to signal if the bicycle is in a designated turn lane or when the operator's hands are needed for the safe operation of the bicycle.

4511.52 Bicycles

A bicycle operator who violates any section of the motor vehicle traffic or equipment law applicable to bicycles may be issued a ticket by a law enforcement officer. The law now states that no points can be assessed against the bicycle operator's drivers license except in instances of operating under the influence.

Where it is determined that a violation by a motor vehicle operator endangered the lives of bicycle riders at the time of a violation, either the bicycle operator or motor vehicle operator may be required to successfully complete a bicycling skills course approved by the court in addition to, or in lieu of, any penalty for the violation.

4511.53 Rules for Bicycles

Clarifies that operators of bicycles are allowed to stand up on the pedals when riding.

4511.55 Riding Bicycles

Still requires bicyclists to ride as far to the right as practicable on the roadway, but clarifies that the law permits riding to the left of hazards, e.g., when fixed or moving objects are in the way; when there are surface hazards; or when it is unsafe or otherwise impractical to do so, such as when the lane is too narrow for the bicycle and an overtaking vehicle to travel safely side by side; or when a slow moving vehicle is permitted to leave the curb lane, as described in 4511.25 above.

4511.56 Signal Devices on Bicycles

Modifies the bicycle lamp and reflector provisions for bicycles operating between sunset and sunrise and in inclement weather. It permits, but does not require, reflectors on the front and on the wheels. A white light is still required on the front, but it may now be mounted on the bike or the rider. A red light is still required to the rear, but it may now be steady or flashing and shall be used in addition to the red reflector; a separate reflector is not required if the light can be seen as well as the reflector. A horn or bell is no longer required.