

Cycling on the footway - international examples

Our research has found that the UK is in a minority of Western countries who have a law prohibiting cycling on the footway (Table 1).

Several countries prohibit cycling on the footway but have exceptions for children. For example, in France and Belgium children under the age of 8 are allowed to cycle on the footway, whilst in Germany and Finland children aged up to 10 and 12 respectively have the same benefits.

Japan and the **Australian state of Victoria** are the only two countries/regions that appear to have laws explicitly permitting cycling on the footway by disabled people. The government of **New Zealand** is also considering proposals for changes to road rules to allow cycling on the footway by disabled people.

Case study - Japan

Japan's [Traffic Safety Guidelines](#) state that, in principle, cyclists should ride in the street and use the footway "only in exceptional cases". One of these exceptions stipulates that:

"Children under 13, adults 70 and over, and people with physical disabilities are permitted to ride a bicycle on the sidewalk"



Safety Guidelines for Cyclists

自転車に乗るときに心がけるべきこと

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Five rules to follow to ensure safety when riding a bicycle

自転車の通行方法 | 自転車安全利用五則 | を守りましょう。

Rule 1



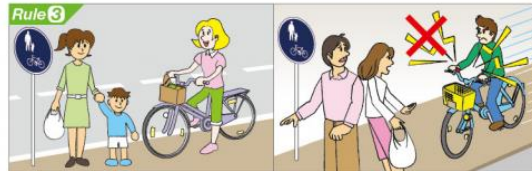
Rule 1 In principle, cyclists should ride on the street and use sidewalks only in exceptional cases

- Bicycles are classified as vehicles, so as a general rule, cyclists should use the street.
- Cyclists should use designated bicycle paths when they are available.
- Cyclists should use the lanes marked for bicycles on sidewalks or roads when they are available.
- Children under 13, adults 70 and over, and people with physical disabilities are permitted to ride a bicycle on the sidewalk.
- When the street is too narrow, cyclists can ride on sidewalks.

第一則

自転車は、車両が原則、歩道は例外。
 ●自転車は車両の仲間なので、原則として車道を通行します。
 ●自転車道があるところでは、自転車道を通行すること。
 ●緑道や自転車歩道通行可の標識がある歩道は、自転車で通行できます。
 ●13歳未満の子ども、70歳以上の高齢者、体の不自由な人は、歩道を自転車で通行できます。
 ※車道の幅が狭い、などのやむを得ない場合には例外として歩道を通行できます。

Rule 3



Rule 3 Cyclists must reduce speed on sidewalks and give pedestrians the right of way

- When passing pedestrians on sidewalks, cyclists should reduce speed enough to enable a sudden stop.
 - Cyclists should stop riding if there is a risk of obstructing passing pedestrians on sidewalks.
 - Cyclists should refrain from unnecessarily ringing bicycle bells at pedestrians on sidewalks.
- Pedestrians are given priority on sidewalks, so cyclists are expected to dismount their bicycle if necessary.

第三則

歩道は歩行者優先で、車道寄りを行く。
 ●歩道を通るときは、すぐ停止できるような速度で骑行すること。
 ●歩行者の通行を妨げるおそれのある場合は一時停止します。
 ●警音鐘を歩行者に対して歩道などでみだりに鳴らさないこと。
 あくまでも歩行者が優先です。必要に応じて自転車を降りましょう。

Case study - Victoria, Australia

In the Australian state of Victoria, [laws](#) state that you can cycle on the footway if you are:

- Under the age of 12
- Are an adult supervising a child under 12
- Have a disability that means it's difficult for you to cycle on the road

Disabled cyclists must be able to show police a medical certificate if they are asked.



Case study - New Zealand

In 2016, a [petition](#) put forward by Jo Clendon asked the government to change road rules to allow cycling on the footpath by young children (and parents riding with them), adults over 65, and people with mental or physical disabilities.

In response, the New Zealand Transport Agency conducted extensive [research](#) into the various options around footpath cycling. Amongst its recommendations were:

- For people using 'mobility trikes' to be allowed to use the footway, "in the same way as others using mobility aids, to maintain their independence and mobility"
- To change the definition of a Mobility Device to include devices that use human power, including mobility trikes

The Transport and Industrial Relations Committee has subsequently published a [report](#), in which it recommended that the government change its road rules in order to:

"Allow cycling on the footpath by children up to and including 12 years of age or year 8 (and accompanying adults), seniors over 65, and vulnerable users (such as those with mental or physical disabilities)"



Table 1: Laws on cycling on the footway in selected countries

Country	Prohibited	Prohibited with exceptions	Child cyclists allowed	Disabled cyclists allowed	All cyclists allowed
UK					
Ireland					
Netherlands					
Sweden					
New Zealand					
France					
Belgium					
Germany					
Finland					
Australia (New South Wales)					
Japan*					
Australia (Victoria)*					
Australia (several states)**					
USA (several states)**					
Norway**					

* There are rules/regulations that explicitly permit cycling on the footway by disabled people

** Cycling on the footway is permitted to all cyclists, and so an assumption has been made that this also applies to disabled cyclists (even though this might not be explicit)