



Safety for bicycle couriers

The working life of a bicycle courier isn't easy. Time pressures, traffic, bad weather, poor air quality, long hours, road hazards, and rude people are just some of the courier's challenges.

Oregon OSHA expects bicycle courier employers to:

- Ensure that couriers understand and follow [Oregon's requirements](#) for cyclists
- Do a hazard assessment to determine the personal protective equipment (PPE) couriers need for their jobs
- Report fatalities and serious workplace injuries promptly to Oregon OSHA

Ensure that couriers understand Oregon's requirements for cyclists

Bicycles are considered vehicles in the [Oregon Vehicle Code](#), which means that couriers must follow the same rules of the road that apply to motorists. The two best places to get information on rules of the road and other requirements for cyclists is the Oregon Department of Transportation's [Bicycle and pedestrian program](#) and the [Oregon bicyclist manual](#).

Do a hazard assessment to determine appropriate PPE

A hazard assessment is a required evaluation of your workplace that helps you determine the hazards that employees such as couriers are exposed to and what PPE they need to protect themselves. A hazard assessment should include:

- The tasks that couriers do
- The hazards couriers are exposed to
- How couriers could be injured
- The PPE necessary to protect couriers

A typical hazard assessment for bicycle couriers would include evaluating the need for head protection, eye protection, hand protection, and high-visibility clothing. Oregon OSHA's [Quick guide to the PPE hazard assessment](#) explains the requirements.



A Division of the
Department of Consumer
and Business Services

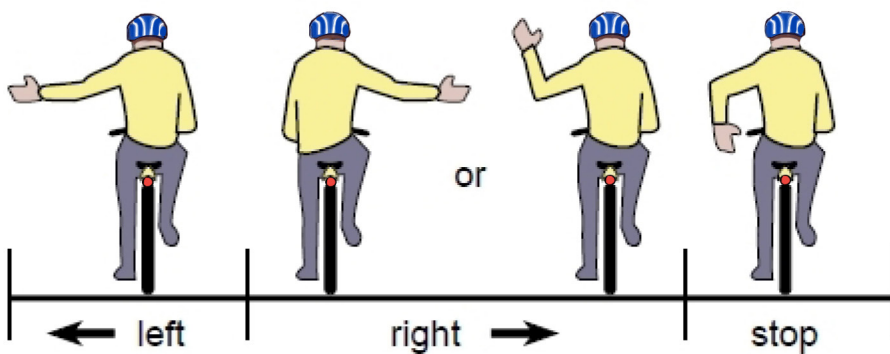
osha.oregon.gov

Salem Central Office
350 Winter St. NE
Salem, OR 97301-3882

Phone: 503-378-3272
Toll-free: 800-922-2689
Fax: 503-947-7461

Protect yourself! Safety tips for couriers

1. Wear a helmet at all times when you are on the bike. It's a no-brainer – no pun intended.
2. Your bike must have a brake. Oregon law [ORS 815.280] says that a bicycle “must be equipped with a brake that enables the operator ... to stop the bicycle within 15 feet from a speed of 10 miles per hour on dry, level, clean pavement.”
3. Obey the rules of the road. They are essentially the same for motor vehicles and bikes.
4. Assume that drivers don't see you. They may be watching other drivers – and not you.
5. Pay attention to what your body is telling you. Riding hundreds of miles a week delivering heavy packages can take a toll on your body. Pay attention to back and shoulder pain before it becomes chronic. Daily stretches and proper riding technique can help reduce the risks.
6. If the bike fits, ride it. A poorly fitting bike also increases injury risks. The wrong frame size and a saddle not adjusted for you will eventually make your ride uncomfortable.
7. Keep the bike in good condition. A well-maintained bike is safer and always rides better than one that isn't.
8. Don't get mad and don't try to get even with irate motorists. Their responses aren't rational. React to an irate motorist by just letting it go. Note the vehicle's license plate number, if necessary.
9. Know your hand signals and use them to communicate with other road users:



Bicyclist hand signals



Report injuries to Oregon OSHA

If a courier dies or is seriously injured on the job, you must promptly notify Oregon OSHA.

Report to Oregon OSHA within eight hours:

- The death of an employee
- A catastrophe (two or more employees are fatally injured, or three or more employees are admitted to a hospital or an equivalent medical facility)
- Work-related fatalities, including those caused by a motor vehicle, that happen during the employee's work shift

Fatalities caused by a heart attack at work must also be reported.

Report to Oregon OSHA within 24 hours:

- An in-patient hospitalization
- Loss of an eye
- An amputation or avulsion that results in bone loss (an avulsion is the tearing away or forcible separation of any body part by trauma)

Oregon OSHA's Reporting work-related incidents fact sheet explains the requirements.