Cyclists at road works
Vulnerable road users

Cyclist safety

Cyclists are particularly vulnerable to accident and injury when travelling through road works, requiring clear and safe operating space to continue their journeys without incident.

Transport and Main Roads addresses this issue in the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which states that “pedestrian and bicycle paths should be provided on the same scale and to the same width as any facilities for pedestrian or bicycle traffic that were existing prior to the works” (Part 3, Section 2.3.7).

No traffic management treatment should negatively impact on the safety of cyclists—this is the responsibility of all traffic management personnel, in both design and implementation.

This fact sheet explores cyclist safety at road works, highlighting current issues and key safety requirements.

Current issues

Some road work sites continue to fall short on cyclist safety. The position of the sign in Fig.1, for example, is unacceptable as it requires cyclists to merge with traffic on a busy arterial road. This sign placement is not only dangerous for cyclists but also frustrating for motorists, as the stream of displaced rides can trigger congestion in the vehicle lane.

In this situation, two alternatives would be acceptable: to position the sign outside the bicycle lane (as shown in Fig. 2 and 3), or to construct a detour route around the worksite.

Further guidance

The reverse side of this fact sheet provides a checklist of key requirements for cyclist safety at road works, addressing some of the most commonly reported infringements on clear and safe operating space.
Key requirements

Signage is clear from the path of travel, and highly visible. It is credible and minimal, instantly informing cyclists of the hazard and desired behaviour, as illustrated in the examples to the right. (*Cyclists dismount* signs are to be avoided wherever possible.)

Sign posts, fencing and safety barriers are positioned to the side of bicycle paths, and do not intrude on bicycle operating space, as pictured on the left.

Traffic signals are used to control the flow of alternating one-way traffic through a worksite, as pictured on the right. Personnel should consider the detection of cyclists at automated traffic signals, and the time it takes for cyclists to clear the area, as this is a function of the grade.

Roadside barriers are Transport and Main Roads-approved, work zone barriers. They should be relatively smooth and continuous, as this ‘low catch factor’ will limit the likelihood of handlebars or pedals getting caught.

Lighting is at least as luminous as the original, and does not shine directly into road users’ eyes. Additional lighting is used where it is necessary to improve visibility or delineation.

Riding surfaces are smooth and without grooves or major surface defects. TMR’s specification MRTS30 outlines the requirements for temporary ramps for the safe trafficking of works in cases where cold-planed transverse and lateral joints are created.

Steel road plates are treated with a skid-resistant surfacing. (It may be possible to avoid using steel plates by staging construction across the footpath.)

Maintenance programs are in place to ensure bicycle paths are clear of debris and loose gravel.

Monitoring and auditing reviews are conducted regularly to assess the reliability and validity of the treatments in place, identifying non-compliance aspects and corrective actions.

Contact
For more information on providing for cyclists at road works, please contact trafficengineering.support@tmr.qld.gov.au.