

## 24. Being aware of driver blind spots and sharing bus lanes

**National Standard reference:** 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.2.1, 4.2.2

### Instructing points

*You can put these instructions into context by using bus lanes as examples.*

You should normally ride in the primary position in bus lanes.

- Look behind, regularly making eye contact with road users behind you.
- If a bus driver in front of you is signalling to pull into a bus stop, look behind and slow down.
- Pass a bus to its right giving plenty of space. You should move into the next lane if needed. Pass in primary position if you don't want road users behind to overtake you.
- Look over your shoulder to check it's clear before moving back to the bus lane.
- Bus drivers signalling right at a bus stop have priority. You should slow down and let them pull out if needed.
- Consider slowing down if a bus driver overtakes you, giving them more time to pull in.
- Keep enough distance to stop when riding behind a bus or road user that might be about to pull in. Consider positioning yourself on the right-hand side of the lane so you can communicate with bus drivers through their wing mirrors.
- This can apply to other vehicles pulling in, not just buses.
- Scan ahead to anticipate what other road users, such as pedestrians, may do. Have your fingers covering your brakes so that you can perform a quick stop if you need to.

### Sharing space with drivers of larger vehicles and those with blind spots

- Every vehicle has blind spots (areas they cannot see).
- Give drivers of larger vehicles and those with blind spots plenty of space.
- With drivers of larger vehicles or those without rear windows, consider positioning yourself to the right of the lane to be able to see the driver's face and eyes (through the driver's right-hand mirror).
- When necessary, stay in primary position in front of drivers of larger vehicles.
- Make eye contact with road users behind you while waiting at lights.
- Avoid passing drivers of slower-moving or queuing vehicles on the left, especially if the driver is signalling left. Instead, pass them wide and usually on the right.
- Look to your left and behind you, making eye contact with the driver as you pull back in front.
- Avoid passing close to vehicles that may reverse out.

## Additional resources



## Activity ideas

Note: The topic of driver blind spots can be delivered much earlier in on-road training. This can be in combination with other training activities (such as negotiating junctions).

After discussing the specific issues related to bus lanes and blind spots, carry out a longer buddy riding journey. You and the riders practise the four key skills as you share space with drivers of large vehicles, including buses that may pull in or out. Give riders the opportunity to lead the group but also to see and interact directly with road users behind. When riding behind riders, consider a position that is slightly to the left to enable them to see behind.

Cycling in a busy bus route that has lots of pedestrians waiting at bus stops, may provide lots of learning opportunities, such as how to deal with vehicles that pull in and out. You could also get riders to cycle in car parks or on roads with heavy car parking where drivers need to reverse out with limited visibility. Here, you will need to coach the riders to look out for drivers who may be reversing out and to give them plenty of space.

Riding through a network of more complex roads will give riders a lot of opportunities to practise all the advanced riding skills and to experience realistic journeys.

In a rural setting, point out how large agricultural vehicles and tractors can have poor visibility, especially when towing.

## Sample questions to check understanding

- Q. Who has priority when a bus driver is signalling to pull out from a bus stop?
- Q. How should you position yourself when riding in bus lanes?
- Q. What do you need to consider when deciding whether to wait behind or pass road users who have pulled in up ahead?
- Q. Why is it important to not cycle up the left side of a large vehicle stopped at most junctions?
- Q. When and how do you overtake a lorry?

## Differentiation

### Inclusion

Riders using wider cycles will need to ride centrally more often in bus lanes. There will also be less space to overtake drivers of buses who have pulled in so they may have to remain in the traffic flow.

Riders using recumbents are more likely to be out of sight of other road users. They will need to ride in the primary position more often and should consider attaching aids (such as flags) to improve other road users' sight of them. Consider asking them to sit from the viewpoint of a driver to see how much or how little drivers can see of them when they use their recumbent cycle.

### Extension

#### *Simplify*

Some riders only want to ride in complex environments with someone buddy riding with them. Use strategies to build confidence such as encouraging positive interactions with other road users (this may make them feel more like a *road user*). Let them know that they are making good progress, even at times when they need extra help. Discuss any alternative strategies and routes with the rider.

#### *Challenge*

Ask riders to carry out longer journeys in increasingly complex environments where they encounter drivers of different types of vehicles.

Drop back, perhaps allowing a driver to overtake you (while you still keep the riders in sight). This way, your riders get to experience a more independent riding experience. Ensure they regularly check where you are so they don't lose you.

## Risk benefit assessment

### Risk

- A rider finds a complex road environment scary and is very nervous, leading them to rush or freeze.
- A rider misjudges the speed and distance of a driver and pulls out in front of them, causing the driver to brake.

### Mitigation

- Build up the rider's confidence by giving them experience interacting with different road users in suitable environments. Ensure you progress towards more complex activities at their pace. Build up their skills gradually, through buddy riding and offering support when necessary.
- Continuously assess all your riders' skills and judgement to ensure activities are only attempted when they are ready.

### Benefits

Riders improve their cycling by carrying out activities at a pace that is rider-led. This allows them to build on previous learning through practice, and to experience more challenge when they are ready.