

25. Riding on roads with a speed limit above 30mph

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

- Look behind regularly to see what's behind you.
- Decide if and when you should be covering your brakes.
- Give yourself more time to look behind and communicate or signal, so that road users behind have enough time to react. Remember to always check behind to ensure it's clear before changing your riding position.
- Consider the speed difference between you and other road users when deciding on which road position to take and how long you will stay in that riding position.

Additional resources

Highway Code responsibilities for motorists overtaking cyclists

Activity ideas

Ensure your riders understand that the same principles outlined in earlier training apply in this environment. You will also need to discuss how a greater speed difference between riders and other road users leads to an increasing level of challenge. Explain that, when riding on faster roads, it may be tempting to tuck into the kerb, but this is risky because you have less space to move into, if you have to. Discuss how regularly looking back can make road users behind more aware of you when cycling. Coach the riders on the need for regular observations, communications and adjustments to road position as and when necessary.

Discuss strategies for managing drivers behind who are eager to overtake. Ask your riders for possible solutions, including how effective gear use can reduce the speed difference with other road users. Also highlight that, while there may be advantages to riding faster in some situations, we should never rush.

This activity is normally best delivered through longer buddy ride journeys. However, it may be possible to also ask riders to carry out point-to-point exercises with you observing from the roadside. In view of the higher speed of traffic, it's important to have good sight lines for independent riding exercises.

When cycling with your riders on faster roads, you should normally ride behind them and ensure that they look back regularly. Prompt them if they need to adjust their riding position. They will need to be aware of drivers behind so consider adjusting your position to enable this (dropping further back or riding slightly to the left to enable them to see behind you).

Activity ideas (continued)

Explain that on some roads and during some situations, a more dynamic riding position is required. It may not always be possible to move all the way out to primary position if road users behind are overtaking at high speed. Discuss how observations, communication and considerations on road position need to be continuous and how we need to always stay alert.

Pull over when necessary for feedback and consider changing the order of the group when required.

Sample questions to check understanding

- Q. How does moving at higher speeds affect other road users' ability to see you, slow down or stop for you, or manoeuvre?
- Q. What is the most suitable road position to be in?
- Q. How can you give other road users more time to react if you wish to make a manoeuvre?
- Q. How should you position yourself on corners when riding on narrow, fast country lanes?

Differentiation

Inclusion

Riders of some cycles may be slower either due to the type of cycle or the rider's ability or physical condition. Adjust the training accordingly and consider offering riders power-assisted cycles if these are available and suitable.

Extension

Simplify

Riders can build confidence by riding on less busy roads, or by riding as a pair.

Challenge

For a more journey-based approach, consider getting the riders to travel longer distances in sessions.

Adjust your position to create more learning opportunities for your riders – you could ride directly behind them, drop back, or even ride slightly to their left. On rare occasions you could ride in front.

Risk benefit assessment

Risk

- A rider moves to the right without checking when riding on a faster road, leading to a 'near miss'.
- A rider who hasn't cycled for a long time is only able to ride at very low speeds, leading to a significant speed difference between them and other road users. This means that some road users overtake very quickly.

Mitigation

- Ensure riders are suitably skilled and confident before moving to roads with a speed limit above 30mph. If a rider lacks skills or confidence, consider recapping previous activities first or provide buddy riding support.
- Consider the speed at which riders can cycle when deciding which roads to use for training.

Benefits

While it is worth discussing alternative routes and cycle infrastructure to avoid 'fast' roads, if riders are skilled enough and can judge speed and distance well, consider including these activities in your training. This will give your riders the experience they need to ride in more diverse environments.