

Cyclists be aware – Japanese traffic law

You should not ride a bicycle on pedestrians' walkway clearly separated from the part for automobiles. You should stay on the left side of a road along with cars. However, there are exceptions: If there is a traffic sign to permit a cyclist on the pedestrians' walkway or if it is unsafe to be on the road along with cars. Please note that the law requires you to give the right of way to pedestrians.

Traffic sign indicating that you can ride a bicycle on pedestrians' walkway.



cyclists and pedestrians sharing



cyclists and pedestrians separated by a line

When you make a right turn at an intersection riding on a bicycle, you are not allowed to path near the center of an intersection. Should there be traffic lights, you need to follow two traffic lights as the consequence. This rule also applies for small motorcycles.



You should get off your bicycle and push your bicycle through when you are crossing a pedestrian's crossing, unless the sign says you can ride a bicycle on the pedestrians crossing.



Japanese traffic law prohibits riding a bicycle intoxicated. It also prohibits unsafe practices, including holding an umbrella.

Two cyclists running side by side is prohibited, unless there is a sign that permits you to do so. (I never saw this sign. See picture on the left.)



You must register (since 1994) your ownership of bicycle(s) when you become an owner even if you are not the first owner of the bicycle. This can be done by most bicycle shops. It costs 500 yen.

Be aware that you can be arrested for riding on a bicycle that is not properly registered under your name.