



Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office

1500 Lamont Street
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49048

Sheriff
RICHARD C. FULLER III

Undersheriff
JAMES E. VANDYKEN

Motorist-Bicycle Safety Reminder

May 9, 2024. The Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office and area law enforcement agencies remind the public that many people rely on bicycles for basic transportation as well as for health and recreational benefits. Warming weather means more bicyclists. With the 13th annual Kalamazoo Area Bike Week (May 11-18) starting on Saturday, Richard Fuller, Kalamazoo County Sheriff, reminds drivers and bicyclists to follow the rules of the road.

Local five-foot passing ordinances exist in Kalamazoo, Portage and Kalamazoo and Oshtemo townships. Elsewhere in Michigan a three-foot safe passing law must be observed. Parking and driving in bike lanes is unsafe and prohibited by law.

"Distracted driving, impaired and aggressive driving, unsafe passing, speeding and running red lights and stop signs pose unacceptable public dangers," warns Sheriff Fuller. "Following the rules of the road also applies to bicyclists. Obey red lights. Don't ride on the wrong side of the road. Signal your intentions and ride your bike predictably, like you would drive a car."

Kalamazoo and Portage Safety Directors David Boysen and Nick Arnold observe, "We urge motorists and bicyclists to be especially cautious at intersections and driveways. Check all around and look behind you before changing lanes and when turning. Don't drive--or bike--distracted or impaired."

Paul Wells, education chair of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club, agrees. "At our Bike Camp we teach that bike riders have the same rules, rights and responsibilities as motorists. Riders who think riding against traffic is safer, actually run a greater chance of being hit by drivers who don't check for wrong way traffic. Running a red light is aggressive and puts your life at risk--so does turning unpredictably without signaling and riding without lights, day or night."

"Following the rules of the road shows you know what you're doing and is safer for everyone. These days any crash is expensive even if no one gets hurt. Showing your kids how to follow the rules of the road sets a good role model. Treating others with courtesy is a great way to put the Golden Rule into practice," commented Paul Selden, founder of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo. "When in doubt, just drive and bike as you would like to be treated."

Bike Friendly Kalamazoo (BFK) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization committed to improving public safety and building the quality of life through bicycling. Event organizers and volunteers throughout greater Kalamazoo make Bike Week 2023 possible. For more information, visit www.kalamazoobikeweek.org and www.bikefriendlykalamazoo.org.

The Kalamazoo Bicycle Club's education committee is dedicated to bicyclist and motorist related education. Its award winning Bike Camp is back in 2023. For more information see www.kalamazooBicycleClub.org/events/bike-camp/.