



January 24, 2025

Allentown City Council  
435 Hamilton St  
Allentown, PA 18101

Dear Allentown City Council,

CAT in collaboration with the students of Community Bike Works, has reviewed existing bicycle ordinances in the City of Allentown. Our goal was to improve public awareness and safety, and consistency between local municipal ordinances and Pennsylvania State Vehicle Code.

Through our review, we have identified changes to Allentown municipal ordinances that will support our efforts to educate bicyclists and motorists about each other's rights and responsibilities on the streets.

Our recommendations are summarized on page 2 of this document and are explained in detail on pages 3-10 of this document.

An additional aspect of this project was for high school students to learn the process by which municipal ordinances are adopted, as well as for them to share their experiences using bicycles for transportation and mobility.

Thank you for your consideration,

Scott Slingerland  
Executive Director

**Summary of Ordinance Changes**  
(for details and discussion, see pages 3-10)

#	Allentown Municipal Ordinance, Chapter 177. Bicycles	Changes Advised
1	<a href="#"><u>§ 177-1. Definition.</u></a>	Update Allentown code definition from “Bicycle” to “Pedalcycle” for consistency with PA Vehicle Code. This will bring inclusion to adult trikes and other similar bicycle variants.  Also, include updated definition for electric-assist bikes.
2	<a href="#"><u>§ 177-2. Secured and lost bicycles.</u></a>	Clerical changes only: “Bicycle” to Pedalcycle” and in C(3) change “his” to “their”.
3	<a href="#"><u>§ 177-3. Owner to register with Chief of Police.</u></a> <a href="#"><u>§ 177-4. Registration; tag; fees.</u></a> <a href="#"><u>§ 177-5. Cancellation of registration; removal of tag.</u></a> <a href="#"><u>§ 177-6. Report of change of ownership or dismantling.</u></a> <a href="#"><u>§ 177-7. Impounding by police for improper registration.</u></a>	Repeal municipal ordinances 177-3 thru 177-7 and advise police department to direct bike owners, bike shops, universities, neighborhoods, and community groups to register their bikes in national database at <a href="https://bikeindex.org/"><u>https://bikeindex.org/</u></a>  Registration via bikeindex.org though not mandatory is encouraged to prevent theft and assist in recovery across multiple jurisdictions.
4	<a href="#"><u>§ 177-8. Keeping to right.</u></a>	Repeal Allentown code to be superceded by PA Vehicle Code.
5	<a href="#"><u>§ 177-9. Trick riding.</u></a>	No change recommended
6	<a href="#"><u>§ 177-10. Brakes; warning device.</u></a>	Repeal Allentown code to be superceded by PA Vehicle Code
7	<a href="#"><u>§ 177-11. Violations and penalties.</u></a>	Repeal Allentown code to be superceded by PA Vehicle Code.
8	<a href="#"><u>Chapter 319 Hamilton Street Regulations</u></a> <a href="#"><u>§ 319-6 Bicycles.</u></a> <a href="#"><u>§ 393-14 Bicycles.</u></a>	Clerical changes only: “Bicycle” to Pedalcycle”

## Comparison of Bicycle Laws in Allentown Municipal Ordinances and Pennsylvania Vehicle Code

(revised 1/24/2025 by CAT-Coalition for Appropriate Transportation in collaboration with students of Community Bike Works)

The table below is intended to highlight differences between local and state bicycle laws with recommended changes to improve consistency, public awareness, and safety. For a complete list of PA Vehicle Code bicycle laws, visit: <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/TravelInPA/active-transportation/Pages/Bicycle-Safety-and-Pennsylvania-Laws.aspx>

#	Allentown Municipal Ordinance, Chapter 177. Bicycles	Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, Title 75	Changes Advised
1	<p><u><a href="#">§ 177-1. Definition.</a></u> [Amended 2-19-1975 by Ord. No. 12123; 6-10-2002 by Ord. No. 13984] As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:</p> <p><b><u>BICYCLE</u></b> A vehicle propelled solely by human-powered pedals. The term does not mean a three-wheeled human-powered pedal-driven vehicle with a main driving wheel 20 inches in diameter or under and primarily designed for children six years of age or younger.</p>	<p><b>§ 102. Definitions. "Pedalcycle."</b> A vehicle propelled solely by human-powered pedals or a pedalcycle with electric assist. The term does not mean a three-wheeled human-powered pedal-driven vehicle with a main driving wheel 20 inches in diameter or under and primarily designed for children six years of age or younger.</p> <p><b>"Pedalcycle with electric assist."</b> A vehicle weighing not more than 100 pounds with two or three wheels more than 11 inches in diameter, manufactured or assembled with an electric motor system rated at not more than 750 watts and equipped with operable pedals and capable of a speed not more than 20 miles per hour on a level surface when powered by the motor source only. The term does not include a device specifically designed for use by persons with disabilities.</p> <p><b>§ 3514. Operation of pedalcycles with electric assist.</b> No person under 16 years of age shall operate a pedalcycle with electric assist. (Oct. 22, 2014, P.L.2543, No.154, eff. 60 days)</p>	<p>Allentown code is inconsistent with PA Vehicle Code.</p> <p>Recommend to update Allentown code language from "Bicycle" to "Pedalcycle" for consistency with PA Vehicle Code. This will bring inclusion to adult trikes and other similar bicycle variants.</p> <p>Also, include updated definition for electric-assist bikes.</p>
2	<p><u><a href="#">§ 177-2. Secured and lost bicycles.</a></u> [Amended 2-19-1975 by Ord. No. 12123; 10-16-1997 by Ord. No. 13609] <u>A.</u> Secured bicycle. A bicycle is defined as a "secured bicycle" when it is made inoperable by application to the bicycle of a lock device which utilizes a key, combination lock or other such mechanism. <u>B.</u> Lost bicycle. A bicycle is defined as a "lost bicycle" when it is found unsecured on any public alley, street, parkway, thoroughfare, public school property, park property, City property or any other public property in the City. <u>C.</u> Handling of lost bicycles. <u>(1)</u> A lost and found bicycle collection and retrieval area shall be designated by the Chief of the Police Department.</p>	<p>Not addressed by state laws</p>	<p>Clerical changes only: "Bicycle" to Pedalcycle" and in C(3) change "his" to "their".</p>

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	<p><u>(2)</u> Any lost bicycle shall be removed by the law enforcement officer or other person designated by the Chief of the Police Department to the lost and found area.</p> <p><u>(3)</u> The lost bicycle shall be returned to its owner upon proof of ownership satisfactory to the Chief of the Police Department or his designee, within 90 days of the date the bicycle is taken into possession; after said period, the Department may dispose of said bicycle according to applicable law.</p>		
3	<p><u>§ 177-3. Owner to register with Chief of Police.</u></p> <p>[Amended 11-29-1938 by Ord. No. 4080; 10-16-1997 by Ord. No. 13609]</p> <p>Every owner or operator of any bicycle shall file with the Chief of Police a complete description of such bicycle upon a blank form to be provided for the purpose, which filing shall constitute a registration of such bicycle. Such registration shall be serially numbered and be kept on file in the office designated by the Chief of Police as a public record.</p> <p><u>§ 177-4. Registration; tag; fees.</u></p> <p><u>A.</u> Immediately upon the registration of a bicycle, the Chief of Police, or someone designated by him, shall affix an identification tag, serially numbered to correspond with the registration of the bicycle. The tag shall thereafter remain affixed to the bicycle unless removed by the Police Bureau for cause, or for reregistration.</p> <p>[Amended 10-16-1997 by Ord. No. 13609]</p> <p><u>B.</u> No person shall use or operate a bicycle upon any of the public alleys, streets, parkways, thoroughfares, park property and City property in the City without being registered by obtaining a license after registering with the Chief of Police or his designee, unless the bicycle owner provides sufficient proof upon request that he is not a resident of the City.</p> <p>[Amended 2-19-1975 by Ord. No. 12123; 10-16-1997 by Ord. No. 13609]</p> <p><u>C.</u> The Chief of Police shall, annually, publish a list of dates, times and where bicycle owners can get bicycles registered.</p>	Not addressed by state laws	<p>Recommend to repeal municipal ordinances 177-3 thru 177-7 and have police department direct bike owners, bike shops, universities, neighborhoods, and community groups to register their bikes in national database at <a href="https://bikeindex.org/">https://bikeindex.org/</a></p> <p>Registration via bikeindex.org though not mandatory is encouraged to prevent theft and assist in recovery across multiple jurisdictions.</p>

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	<p>[Amended 6-10-2002 by Ord. No. 13984]</p> <p><a href="#"><u>§ 177-5. Cancellation of registration; removal of tag.</u></a></p> <p>[Amended 11-29-1938 by Ord. No. 4080]</p> <p>The Chief of Police shall have the authority to cancel the registration of and remove the identification tag from any bicycle being operated upon any street or public place in the City in an unsafe manner, or in violation of any state law or local ordinance. Such cancellation of registration and removal of tag shall be in addition to other penalties provided hereunder.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>§ 177-6. Report of change of ownership or dismantling.</u></a></p> <p>[Amended 4-18-1945 by Ord. No. 5278]</p> <p>Within 48 hours after any bicycle registered hereunder shall have changed ownership or been dismantled and taken out of operation, such information shall be reported to the Chief of Police by the person in whose name the bicycle has been registered.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>§ 177-7. Impounding by police for improper registration.</u></a></p> <p>[Amended 7-3-1962 by Ord. No. 9843; 6-10-2002 by Ord. No. 13984]</p> <p>Any bicycle being ridden, used or found on the streets of the City without a registration tag, or with an altered or mutilated serial number, shall be considered as not being properly registered and shall be taken up and impounded by the Bureau of Police until the person claiming ownership shall establish his right of ownership.</p>		
4	<p><a href="#"><u>§ 177-8. Keeping to right.</u></a></p> <p>[Amended 11-29-1938 by Ord. No. 4080 ; 10-16-1997 by Ord. No. 13609; 8-18-2005 by Ord. No. 14311]</p> <p>The rider of a bicycle upon a street or roadway shall ride as near as practicable within five feet of the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway, except when passing a standing or other vehicle or making a left-hand turn at an intersection, and at all</p>	<p><b>§ 3301. Driving on right side of roadway.</b></p> <p><b>(a) General rule.</b>--Upon all roadways of sufficient width, a vehicle shall be driven upon the right half of the roadway except as follows:</p> <p>(1) When overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction where permitted by the rules governing such movement.</p>	<p>Allentown code is inconsistent with PA Vehicle Code.</p> <p>Recommend to repeal Allentown code to be</p>

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	<p>times shall obey the traffic laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Allentown.</p>	<p>(2) When an obstruction exists making it necessary to drive to the left of the center of the roadway, provided the driver yields the right-of-way to all vehicles traveling in the proper direction upon the unobstructed portion of the roadway within such distance as to constitute a hazard.</p> <p>(3) When and where official traffic-control devices are in place designating a lane or lanes to the left side of the center of the roadway for the movement indicated by the devices.</p> <p>(4) Upon a roadway restricted to one-way traffic.</p> <p>(5) When making a left turn as provided in sections 3322 (relating to vehicle turning left) and 3331 (relating to required position and method of turning).</p> <p>(6) In accordance with section 3303(a)(3) (relating to overtaking vehicle on the left).</p> <p>...</p> <p><b>(c) Pedalcycles.--</b></p> <p>(1) Upon all roadways, any pedalcycle operating in accordance with Chapter 35, proceeding at less than the normal speed of traffic at the time and place and under the conditions then existing shall be driven in the right-hand lane then available for traffic, or as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway, except when overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction or when preparing for a left turn at an intersection or into an alley, private road or driveway.</p> <p>(2) This subsection does not apply to:</p> <p>(i) A pedalcycle using any portion of an available roadway due to unsafe surface conditions.</p> <p>(ii) A pedalcycle using a roadway that has a width of not more than one lane of traffic in each direction.</p> <p>(Feb. 2, 2012, P.L.27, No.3, eff. 60 days)</p> <p><b>§ 3505. Riding on roadways and pedalcycle paths.</b></p> <p><b>(a) General rule.--</b>Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c), every person operating a pedalcycle upon a highway shall obey the applicable rules of the road as contained in this title.</p> <p><b>(b) Operation on shoulder.--</b>A pedalcycle may be operated on the shoulder of a highway and shall be operated in the same direction as required of vehicles operated on the roadway. All turns shall be made in accordance with section 3331 (relating to required position and method of turning).</p>	<p>superceded by PA Vehicle Code.</p> <p>Comment from PennDOT Bicycle Driver's Manual: "Taken together, 3505 (c) and 3301 (b) state that slower vehicles should keep to the right, which is the normal expectation of all road users, while permitting bicyclists to make movements consistent with their intended route. This language does not require a bicyclist to ride on the shoulder or on the white fog line. A bicyclist may operate on the roadway and ride in the center of the rightmost lane when appropriate or to avoid hazardous road conditions. See generally pages 9-10."</p>

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		<p><b>(c) Slower than prevailing speeds.</b>--A pedalcycle operated at slower than prevailing speed shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of section 3301 (relating to driving on right side of roadway) unless it is unsafe to do so.</p> <p><b>(d) One-way roadways.</b>--Any person operating a pedalcycle upon a roadway which carries traffic in one direction only and has two or more marked traffic lanes may ride as near the left-hand curb or edge of the roadway as practicable, exercising due care when passing a standing vehicle or one proceeding in the same direction.</p> <p><b>(e) Limitation on riding abreast.</b>--Persons riding pedalcycles upon a roadway shall not ride more than two abreast except on paths or parts of roadways set aside for the exclusive use of pedalcycles.</p>	
5	<p><a href="#"><u>§ 177-9. Trick riding.</u></a> [Amended 11-29-1938 by Ord. No. 4080] No operator of any bicycle shall carry any other person upon the bar, handle or other part of any bicycle and no other person shall so ride upon any bicycle. No operator of a bicycle shall do trick riding such as riding the same without having his hands on the handlebars.</p>	<p>Not directly addressed in PA Vehicle Code. Closest section: <b>§ 3504. Riding on pedalcycles.</b> <b>(a) Use of seat by operator.</b>--A person propelling a pedalcycle shall not ride other than upon or astride a permanent and regular seat attached to the pedalcycle. <b>§ 3506. Articles carried by operator.</b> No person operating a pedalcycle shall carry any package, bundle or article which prevents the driver from keeping at least one hand upon the handlebars.</p>	No change recommended
6	<p><a href="#"><u>§ 177-10. Brakes; warning device.</u></a> [Amended 11-29-1938 by Ord. No. 4080; 10-16-1997 by Ord. No. 13609; 6-10-2002 by Ord. No. 13984] Every bicycle shall be equipped with brakes in good condition and lights, if operated during darkness.</p>	<p><b>§ 3507. Lamps and other equipment on pedalcycles.</b> <b>(a) Lamps and reflectors.</b>--Every pedalcycle when in use between sunset and sunrise shall be equipped on the front with a lamp which emits a beam of white light intended to illuminate the pedalcycle operator's path and visible from a distance of at least 500 feet to the front, a red reflector facing to the rear which shall be visible at least 500 feet to the rear and an amber reflector on each side. Operators of pedalcycles may supplement the required front lamp with a white flashing lamp, light-emitting diode or similar device to enhance their visibility to other traffic and with a lamp emitting a red flashing lamp, light-emitting diode or similar device visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear. A lamp or lamps worn by the operator of a pedalcycle shall comply with the requirements of this subsection if the lamp or lamps can be seen at the distances specified. <b>(b) Audible signal devices.</b>--A pedalcycle may be equipped with a device capable of giving a signal audible for</p>	<p>Allentown ordinances are inconsistent with PA Vehicle Code.</p> <p>Recommend to repeal Allentown code to be superceded by PA Vehicle Code</p>



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		<p>a distance of at least 100 feet except that a pedalcycle shall not be equipped with nor shall any person use upon a pedalcycle any siren.</p> <p><b>(c) Brakes.</b>--Every pedalcycle shall be equipped with a braking system which will stop the pedalcycle in 15 feet from an initial speed of 15 miles per hour on a dry, level and clean pavement.</p> <p>(Dec. 15, 1995, P.L.655, No.72, eff. 60 days; Dec. 21, 1998, P.L.1126, No.151, eff. 60 days)</p>	
7	<p><u><a href="#">§ 177-11. Violations and penalties.</a></u>  [Amended 11-29-1938 by Ord. No. 4080; 8-18-2005 by Ord. No. 14311]  Any person violating the provisions of this chapter shall be fined not more than \$25 and, in default of payment of fine and costs, imprisoned not more than 10 days. For all sections of this chapter, except § <u><a href="#">177-8</a></u>, the fine shall be \$50.</p>	<p><b>§ 3502. Penalty for violation of subchapter.</b>  Any person violating any provision of this subchapter is guilty of a summary offense and shall, upon conviction, be sentenced to pay a fine of \$10.</p> <p><b>§ 3503. Responsibility of parent or guardian.</b>  The parent of any child and the guardian of any ward shall not authorize or knowingly permit the child or ward to violate any of the provisions of this title relating to the operation of pedalcycles.</p>	<p>Allentown ordinances are inconsistent with PA Vehicle Code and threaten potential imprisonment for traffic offenses such as not having brakes on one's bike.</p> <p>Recommend to repeal Allentown code to be superceded by PA Vehicle Code.</p>
8	<p><u><a href="#">Chapter 319 Hamilton Street Regulations</a></u>  <b>[HISTORY: Adopted by the City Council of the City of Allentown 11-6-1974 by Ord. No. 12099 (Article 961 of the 1962 Codified Ordinances). Amendments noted where applicable.]</b></p> <p><u><a href="#">§ 319-6 Bicycles.</a></u>  [Amended 6-5-1991 by Ord. No. 13060; 6-4-2004 by Ord. No. 14191]</p> <p><b>A.</b> Bicycles may be ridden in the street and shall not be ridden on the sidewalk at any time, but may be walked on the sidewalk area.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Bicycles shall be parked in the bicycle racks when racks are provided.</p> <p><b>C.</b> Bicycles operated by on-duty police officers and Allentown Parking Authority personnel are exempt from any prohibiting provisions of this chapter.</p>	<p><b>§ 3508. Pedalcycles on sidewalks and pedalcycle paths.</b>  <b>(a) Right-of-way to pedestrians.</b>--A person riding a pedalcycle upon a sidewalk or pedalcycle path used by pedestrians shall yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian and shall give an audible signal before overtaking and passing a pedestrian.</p> <p><b>(b) Business districts.</b>--A person shall not ride a pedalcycle upon a sidewalk in a business district unless permitted by official traffic-control devices, nor when a usable pedalcycle-only lane has been provided adjacent to the sidewalk.</p> <p><b>§ 3509. Parking.</b>  <b>(a) Sidewalks.</b>--  (1) A person may park a pedalcycle on a sidewalk unless prohibited or restricted by an official traffic-control device.</p>	<p>Clerical changes only: "Bicycle" to Pedalcycle"</p> <p>No other changes recommended, but this opens a bigger discussion about traffic environment, street design, and navigating one-way streets in Allentown for the public and law enforcement/parking officers – and exercise of care related to speed, safety, and behavior</p>



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	<p><a href="#"><u>§ 393-14 Bicycles.</u></a>  [Amended 7-18-2012 by Ord. No. 15005]  <b>A.</b> In the Core Business District, bicycles may be ridden in the street but shall not be ridden on the sidewalk at any time. Bicycles may be walked on the sidewalk in the Core Business District. The location and boundaries of the Core Business District are delineated in <a href="#"><u>§ 393-2.</u></a>  <b>B.</b> Bicycles shall be parked in the bicycle racks when racks are provided.  <b>C.</b> Bicycles operated by on-duty police officers and Allentown Parking Authority personnel are exempt from any prohibiting provisions of this chapter.</p>	<p>(2) A pedalcycle parked on a sidewalk shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of pedestrian or other traffic.  <b>(b) Roadways.--</b>  (1) A pedalcycle may be parked on the roadway at any angle to the curb or edge of the roadway at any location where parking is allowed.  (2) A pedalcycle may be parked on the roadway abreast of another pedalcycle or pedalcycles near the side of the roadway at any location where parking is allowed.  (3) A person shall not park a pedalcycle on a roadway in such a manner as to obstruct the movement of a legally parked motor vehicle.  (4) In all other respects, pedalcycles parked anywhere on a highway shall conform with the provisions of Subchapter E of Chapter 33 (relating to stopping, standing and parking).</p>	<p>for bicyclists on sidewalks.</p> <p>International Police Mountain Bike Association (IPMBA) guidance for law Enforcement officers: "Legality of operating a bike on pedestrian facilities has a unique impact on uniformed cyclists, who are bound to uphold the law and set a good example." "The Complete Guide to Public Safety Cycling", Second Edition, International Police Mountain Bike Association, 2007</p>
9		<p><b>§ 3510. Pedalcycle helmets for certain persons.</b>  <b>(a) General rule.--</b>A person under 12 years of age shall not operate a pedalcycle or ride as a passenger on a pedalcycle unless the person is wearing a pedalcycle helmet meeting the standards of the American National Standards Institute, the American Society for Testing and Materials, the Snell Memorial Foundation's Standards for Protective Headgear for Use in Bicycling or any other nationally recognized standard for pedalcycle helmet approval. This subsection shall also apply to a person who rides:  (1) upon a pedalcycle while in a restraining seat attached to a pedalcycle; or  (2) in a trailer towed by a pedalcycle.</p>	<p>PA Vehicle Code for reference only, no changes advised. We strongly advocate helmet use by all.</p>
10		<p><b>§ 3705. Opening and closing vehicle doors.—</b> No person shall open any door on a motor vehicle unless and until it is reasonably safe to do so and can be done without interfering with the movement of other traffic, nor shall any person leave a door open on a side of a vehicle available to moving traffic for a period of time longer than necessary to load or unload passengers.</p>	<p>PA Vehicle Code for reference only, no changes advised.</p> <p>We strongly advocate car occupants not to open doors into the</p>

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		<p>Comment: The operator of a parked vehicle has to proceed with due care when opening a door into traffic. Opening a door and interfering with the movement of traffic, including bicycle traffic, is punishable as a summary offense.</p>	<p>paths of bicyclists, as well as for bicyclists not ride in the door zone.</p>
11		<p><b>§ 3336. Method of giving hand and arm signals.</b>— All signals given by hand and arm shall be given from the left side of the vehicle in the following manner except as indicated for pedalcycles and motorcycles and the signals shall indicate as follows:</p> <p>(1) For a left turn, the hand and arm shall be extended horizontally.</p> <p>(2) For a right turn, the left hand and arm shall be extended upward, except that operators of motorcycles and pedalcycles may also be permitted to signal a right turn by extending the right hand and arm horizontally.</p> <p>(3) To stop or decrease speed, the left hand and arm shall be extended downward</p>	<p>PA Vehicle Code for reference only, no changes advised.</p> <p>Bicyclists should signal turns to improve their predictability for motorists.</p>
12		<p><b>§ 3331. Required position and method of turning.</b>  <i>Subsections (a) – (e) not included for brevity</i>  (e) Interference with pedalcycles.— No turn by a driver of a motor vehicle shall interfere with a pedalcycle proceeding straight while operating in accordance with Chapter 35 (relating to special vehicles and pedestrians).</p> <p>PennDOT comments from PA Bicycle Drivers' Manual:  People on bikes, as well as in motor vehicles, must make the right turn as close to the curb as practical and the left turns are to be made from the left lane.</p> <p>Motor vehicles can and do "right-hook" cyclists by partially overtaking them (not completing the passing maneuver) and then performing an right turn that cuts off the cyclist's lane of travel. This maneuver can cause a collision with the cyclist throwing them off their vehicle and under the wheels of the motor vehicle. The correct action is to fall in behind the cyclist and make the right turn from that position.</p>	<p>PA Vehicle Code for reference only, no changes advised.</p>