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Roanoke's 2023 Traffic Safety Campaign Urges Drivers to Change Lanes to Pass Bicyclists

Drivers must allow a minimum of 3 feet of space between vehicles and bikes.

ROANOKE, Va. (June 2023) – The City of Roanoke is taking steps to make the roads safer for bicyclists and drivers. To help reduce car and bicycle collisions, the City of Roanoke is launching a bicycle safety campaign that will run from June 10 to July 21. The [Change Lanes to Pass campaign](#) aims to reduce car and bicycle collisions by making sure all Roanokers know about the Virginia state law requiring drivers to change lanes when passing, and also to give 3 feet minimum when passing. The campaign kicks off on June 10th with an event at Cardinal Bicycle's [20k for the Greenway](#) ride.

“The City of Roanoke has seen an increase in crashes involving bicyclists since 2008, and we want to take steps to address the issue,” says Dwayne D’Ardenne, Transportation Division Manager for the City of Roanoke. “We can all work together to make our streets safer.”

This is the fourth year the city has launched its annual traffic safety campaign, made possible by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. Virginia law states that drivers passing bicyclists traveling in the same direction must allow a minimum of 3 feet of space between their vehicle and the bicyclist. If the travel lane is not wide enough to allow this, [the driver must change lanes](#) (VA Code 46.2-839). Virginia law also states that drivers shall cross a double yellow line to give a bicyclist at least 3 feet of space when passing (VA Code 46.2-804). Once passed, the driver shall return to the right side of the road only once clear of the overtaken bicycle (VA Code 46.2-839).

“Passing a bicyclist too closely is not just scary, it can result in life-altering crashes, injuries, and even death,” said Rob Issem, Roanoke’s Complete Streets and Vision Zero Coordinator for the Department of Transportation. “We know that drivers changing lanes to pass bicyclists safely can lead to fewer collisions, which is why we want to engage the community and inform them of this relatively new Virginia law.”

As part of the campaign, Roanokers are invited to play the Change Lanes to Pass [online game](#) to test their knowledge of Virginia traffic safety laws for a chance to win gift cards to local businesses provided by Downtown Roanoke Inc.

Learn more about the campaign at PlanRoanoke.org/TrafficSafety.

The Change Lanes to Pass Campaign kicks off on June 10th, starting at the 20k for the Greenway Ride at Cardinal Bicycle. Campaign representatives will be onsite to talk about traffic safety laws for drivers and bikers, answer questions, and distribute campaign materials.

To find more information about the event and sign up to ride, visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Roanoke/20kfortheGreenway>.

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About the Change Lanes to Pass Campaign

To address high-injury, bicyclists-involved crashes, and inform drivers of a relatively new Virginia law, this year's citywide bicycle safety campaign, running from June 12 to July 21, 2023, is focused on increasing awareness of Virginia's change lanes to pass law and the requirement to give 3 feet minimum when passing to help reduce car and bicycle crashes. The campaign is funded by Federal highway safety funds through the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.