

RIDING WITH CARGO

Photo Source: Jack Alexander

BENEFITS OF RIDING

- Simple solution to two major problems: congestion and greenhouse gas emissions
- Increased physical activity
- Boost to brain
- Freedom of movement
- No need for a car
- Be social on group rides and with family

GETTING READY TO RIDE

BALANCE THE WEIGHT OF YOUR CARGO

- Learn about how your bike is packed, which will influence how it handles cargo weight
- Secure your load with bungee cords

PLAN THE BEST ROUTE FOR YOU

- Think about the existing bicycle network, and plan on connecting different pieces of infrastructure with low to medium-level of stress streets.
- Consider going multi-modal with your trips and try taking trails to the T
- Use data such as [Boston's Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress Map](#) to guide your routes.
- While riding, be sure to have patience with others who walk, bike, or drive; be predictable and communicate on the road; and negotiate with hand signals or eye contact.

BRUSH UP ON BEST PRACTICES FOR BIKING

- Ride safely and legally: stop at red lights and stop signs; yield to pedestrians; and make sure your cargo bike/trailer has lights and is not obscured.
- Ride in the same direction as all traffic and hold the line. Be sure not to swerve, as it might swing more with cargo.
- Make sure you stay out of the door zone (3-4 foot zone next to parked cars) to avoid getting "doored".
- When making left turns, be cautious and try the two-stage left: ride on the right side of the road, stop at the far end of the cross section and wait for the light to change, then ride straight. This will help navigate a left turn at intersections without crossing traffic. With long cargo bikes, try avoiding being in front of vehicles and be in a spot that is separated.
- Avoid the right hook and be careful when passing stopped cars. Try to merge and be in line with traffic in between cars instead of being parallel with traffic at an intersection. When next to a bus or truck, the blind side on the right side is very severe, as many drivers align mirrors to the back right wheel instead of to traffic, so be cautious when sharing the road.
- When merging in traffic, start early and signal with a look back and eye contact or a hand signal. Use communication to be noticeable to drivers. If a driver is not yielding, go behind the car, slow down and tap your brakes to merge.

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RIDING WITH KIDS

KID SEATS ON BIKES

- Under Massachusetts law, no child under 1 year is allowed to be on a bike (trailer or kid seat), as their necks cannot support the weight of a helmet.
- Typically, 40 pounds is the weight limit for cargo seats made for children, but it depends on the manufacturer.
- Kid seats come in both front and back seat forms. Front loader seats allow riders to keep an eye on the child, but the dangers of traffic might happen towards the front of the bike. Back loader seats protect kids from any front crashes, but will require a rack that fits the bike and considerations on space (ex. backpack that may be in the space of a child) and rear tire modifications. Due to the extra weight on the wheel for a rear loader seat, the wheel may require lower air and more maintenance in case of a pinch flat.
- It would be most helpful to go to a bike shop to learn how to best custom-modify your bike.

RIDING ALONGSIDE KIDS

- Pedal with kids through tag along bikes or attachments to connect their bikes with your bike, so kids can learn how to pedal while you still maintain control on the roads.
- Riding with kids can help teach them the mechanics of pedaling, create muscle memory, and introduce them to traffic patterns while biking (being cautious at intersections and following signals).
- Try riding with bike groups, where several adults can be in the front and rear to reinforce good cycling behavior.