Whether we’re walking, bicycling, or driving, we must share the roads, sidewalks, and trails with others. Sharing the road safely is especially important for bicyclists and pedestrians, who are more vulnerable than motorists. In order to do so, we all need to understand the laws that govern walking, bicycling, and driving; these laws are found in the New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law. Following these laws makes us safer and shows respect for other users of the road. Walking, bicycling, and driving in a safe and respectful way will also garner greater respect from others, increasing safety for everyone.
LAWS FOR WHEN YOU’RE WALKING
Obey all traffic signals, signs and pavement markings when you are crossing a street. (Section 1150, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law).

Follow pedestrian signals when they are present (www.safeny.ny.gov/dot-ped.htm).

Walking person/Walk: Check for traffic, and turn vehicles; begin crossing.

Steady Red Hand/Don’t Walk: Do not start to cross. Wait for the next Walk.

Flashing Red Hand/Don’t Walk: If you are already in the street, finish crossing. If you have not started crossing, wait for the next Walk. There may be a countdown timer that indicates how many seconds you have to complete the crossing.

When you are in a crosswalk where there isn’t a traffic control signal, drivers must yield the right-of-way to you. (Section 1151, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law).

At mid-block locations, if there isn’t a crosswalk, sign, or signal, you must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles on the roadway (Section 1157, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law). It is always safer to cross at an intersection.

WHERE TO WALK
Use sidewalks where they are provided and safe to use. When there are no sidewalks, walk on the left side of the roadway or shoulder, facing traffic. (Section 1156-b, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law). Stay as far to the left as possible.

Tip: See and Be Seen! Wear bright and/or reflective clothing, especially at night.

LAWS FOR WHEN YOU’RE BICYCLING
RIDING ON THE ROAD
You have the legal right to ride a bicycle on most public highways, except interstate highways and certain expressways. When riding on the road, you have all of the rights and are subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle (Section 1231, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law).

Therefore, you must obey all traffic signals, signs and pavement markings (Section 1230-a, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law).

Always ride in the same direction as traffic (Section 1234-a, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law). Riding with traffic makes you more visible and predictable to motorists.

If there is a usable bicycle lane, you must use it (Section 1234-a, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law). If there is no bicycle lane or it is unusable due to parked cars or other hazards, you must ride on the right shoulder or near the right edge of curb if the roadway in a manner to avoid undue interference with other traffic, unless the lane is too narrow, you are turning left, or you need to move further left to avoid hazards such as parked cars or debris.

The presence of an off-road path does not preclude your right to ride in the roadway. In some cases, a roadway may be safer or more convenient than a path.

Riding a bicycle on a sidewalk is not prohibited by New York State law, but municipalities may pass ordinances prohibiting bicycling on sidewalks. Riding on sidewalks can cause conflicts or crashes with pedestrians and motorists because they are not looking for you on the sidewalk. Except for very young cyclists under parental supervision, bicycling on sidewalks is not recommended.

BICYCLING WITH OTHERS
You may ride two abreast on roadways, but must ride single file when being overtaken by other vehicles or when passing vehicles, pedestrians or other bicyclists. You may only ride more than two abreast on a shoulder, lane or path intended for bicycling only if there is sufficient space (Section 1234-b, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law).

Use the same through or turning lanes as motorists. When making a left turn, you may choose to dismount and use the crosswalk as a pedestrian. After crossing the intersection, move to a usable right-hand shoulder or to the right side of the right-hand lane.

Your position when preparing for a turn is governed by the turning rules that apply to other traffic (Section 1234-a, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law). When preparing for a left turn, move to the center of the lane to prevent a following motorist from sharing the lane. If there is more than one left turn lane, use the furthest to the right. After a left turn, move to the right as soon as it is safe to do so.

Use hand signals before you make a turn (Section 1237, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law). When preparing for a left turn, move to the center of the lane to prevent

Keep at least one hand on the handlebar at all times. (Section 1235, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law).

NEVER wear more than one earphone attached to an audio device (Section 375, 24-p, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law).

Tip: Establish eye contact with drivers and pedestrians before making a turn or changing lanes.

HELMETS
Helmets are required for everyone under 14 years old. Child passengers ages one through four must also ride in a child safety seat. Children under the age of one are prohibited from being transported on a bicycle (Section 1238-d, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law). Certain localities in New York State have passed stricter local helmet ordinances (see http://www.helmets.org/mandator.htm).

A bicycle must be equipped with:
• A brake capable of making the tires skid on dry level pavement.
• A bell, horn or other audible device that can be heard at least a hundred feet away.

Tip: Every bicyclist should wear an approved helmet to reduce the risk of sustaining a serious head injury. A helmet should fit squarely on top of the head in a level position and cover the top of the forehead extending down to an inch above the eyebrows. The helmet should not be able to slide back and forth on the head or rock from side to side.

EQUIPMENT
A headlight and taillight, front and rear reflectors, spoke reflectors and pedal reflectors to be used when riding at night (Section 1236, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law).

Tip: Warn others before you pass—use your bell and call out "on your left!"

SAFETY
Tip: See and Be Seen! Be visible and predictable! Wear bright or reflective clothing. Ride in a straight line. Do not weave in and out of traffic. Leave 3 feet between yourself and parked cars so you can avoid a door that opens unexpectedly.

The Bike Box is an intersection safety design to prevent bicycle/car collisions at the intersection.

Tip: Establish eye contact with drivers and pedestrians before making a turn or changing lanes.