

Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety

for parents and youth




TSCN
TRAFFIC SAFE
COMMUNITIES
NETWORK

A project of Traffic Safe Communities Network (TSCN) in Santa Clara County

In collaboration with the Trauma Center at Stanford University Medical Center, Santa Clara Police Department, Santa Clara County Office of the Sheriff, Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety, and Santa Clara County Public Health Department

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is for:

- Parents thinking about letting kids walk to school or use a bicycle, scooter or skateboard to travel to school, but are wondering if it will be safe.
- Kids who are already walking and bicycling to school, and need more information about current traffic laws.
- Motorists who want to know how vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians can safely share the road.
- Anyone wanting to know a little bit more about walking and bicycling safely in our community.

If you would like more detailed information, references to California Vehicle Code (VC) are listed throughout the book and will look like this (VC21235d). The website address is www.dmv.ca.gov.

If you would like more information about selecting the right helmet for your activity, consult the Consumer Product Safety Commission website at www.cpsc.gov and look for the brochure "Which Helmet for Which Activity?"

Check the NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) website for the "7 Smart Routes to Bicycle Safety" at www.nhtsa.gov



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Common Causes of Bicycle and Pedestrian Collisions	2	Page 2
Safety Reminders for Bicyclists and Pedestrians	2	Page 2
Laws for Pedestrians	3	Page 2
Safety for Scooters and Skateboarders	5	Page 4
Helmet Safety	6	Page 6
Bicycle Equipment Safety	7	Page 7
Bike Rules	8	Page 8
Share the Road Tips for Motorists	15	Page 15
A Few Guidelines for Motorized Scooters	18	Page 18

COMMON CAUSES OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INJURIES

- Crashing or falling while not wearing a helmet
- Bicyclists on the wrong side of the street
- Pedestrians trying to cross the street mid-block
- Not following traffic signs and signals

SAFETY REMINDERS FOR BICYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS

- Stop and look both ways before entering a street, even from a driveway or parking lot. Look left, right and left again before entering the street.
- Make eye contact and make sure the driver sees you before crossing in front of a car.

LAWS FOR PEDESTRIANS

ObeY Signals

- Follow all signs and signals.
- Start walking only when "Walk" or white pedestrian is showing.

- If the red hand is flashing, you may continue to cross, but don't start.
- Do not start walking against a "Don't Walk" symbol (VC21456 (b)) or if the red hand is steady.



Use Sidewalks

- Walk on the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic.
- Don't walk in the bike lane if there is sidewalk available. (VC21966)

Cross at Corners

- The safest place to cross is at a corner, with or without a crosswalk. (VC21954 (a)) Crossing mid-block where drivers are not expecting to see you is the most common cause of pedestrian injury.

Right of Way

- Pedestrians do not automatically have the right of way, even when there is a crosswalk. Pedestrians must give cars enough time to stop before entering the street. (VC21950(b))

Challenge Number 1

You are walking to a friend's house and stop at the signal with a crosswalk and a pedestrian signal (walking man.) Cars are also stopped at the light waiting to turn right. The light turns green. Who has the right of way, you or the car? What should you do?

The expert says ...

The car should wait for the pedestrians in the crosswalk. But ... you should always stop and make eye contact with the driver to make sure it's safe before you step off the curb.



HINTS

- Check your equipment for wear and tear.
- Only allow one person per skateboard.
- Do not hitch rides from bicycles, cars, or other vehicles.
- Never ride in the street.
- Obey all traffic laws
- Ride on smooth surfaces. Watch for uneven pavement, and areas of dirt, sand, gravel and water, which can cause falls.
- Carefully practice tricks in designated skateboarding areas.
- Learn to fall-practice falling on a soft surface or grass.

HELMETS

Choose a multi-sport helmet with a Snell N-94 label. The N-94 standard requires that helmets pass multiple impact tests to the back during laboratory testing. These helmets may be used for bicycling, roller and in-line skating, scooters and skateboarding.

Bicycle helmets with the CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission) label are also good for skating and scooters.

SAFETY FOR SCOOTERS AND SKATEBOARDERS

Every skateboarder, and those using scooters or skates should ALWAYS wear a helmet. (It's the law for everyone under the age of 18 years.) (VC 21212(a))

In addition to helmets, wear padding, and closed-toe and slip-resistant shoes while skateboarding or using a scooter or skates.

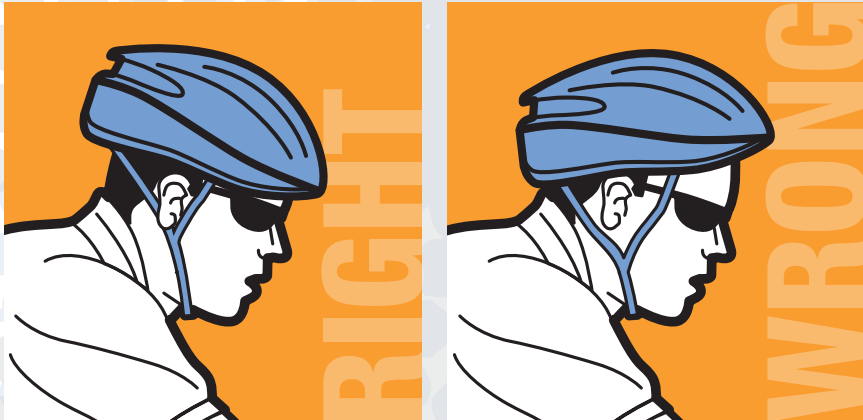
Specific guidelines for where you may legally ride a skateboard vary from city to city. Check with your local law enforcement agency.

PROTECT YOUR HEAD – WEAR A HELMET

Helmets are *required* for everyone under the age of 18 years when riding a bicycle, scooter, skateboard or skates. (VC21212 (a))

Helmets are *strongly* recommended for people of all ages.

Wearing a properly fitted helmet can reduce the risk of serious head injury by 85%



A well fitted helmet is **SNUG, LEVEL, and LOW**

SNUG: Helmet should not wobble from side to side, and no more than two fingers should fit between the chin strap and chin.

LEVEL: The helmet should be centered on the head without being pushed forward or backward.

LOW: The helmet should be low enough to cover the forehead, and should sit no more than two fingers widths above the eyebrows.

Replace your helmet when it has been in a crash, if either the outer shell or foam is cracked/broken or the foam has gotten hard, and if it doesn't fit anymore.

BICYCLE EQUIPMENT SAFETY

■ Purchase a bicycle that fits your size. Stand over the top of the bicycle. There should be 1-2 inches between you and the bar.

■ A properly working bicycle is key to your safety. Use the ABC Quick Check before riding

A..... Air – Are the tires fully inflated?

B Brakes – Do the brakes work?

C Chain – Is the chain oiled?

Quick Is the lever that holds the wheels in place securely closed?

Check Make a quick slow ride around to make sure everything is working properly.



Challenge Number 2

You are bicycling with two friends. There is plenty of space on the road and no cars in sight. Is it okay to ride three across on the road or are you required to ride single file?

The expert says ...

California law does not require bicyclists to ride single file. But for your safety and to not impede vehicles approaching from behind, it's safest to ride single file.

Be Visible at Night

Don't assume drivers can see you at night (especially if you are wearing dark clothes.)

A front white headlight and a rear reflector are required when riding at night. A red light on the rear is strongly recommended. (VC21201(d))



Joggers, bicyclists, and even pedestrians, should wear light clothes and reflective tape for extra visibility. (VC 21201(d))

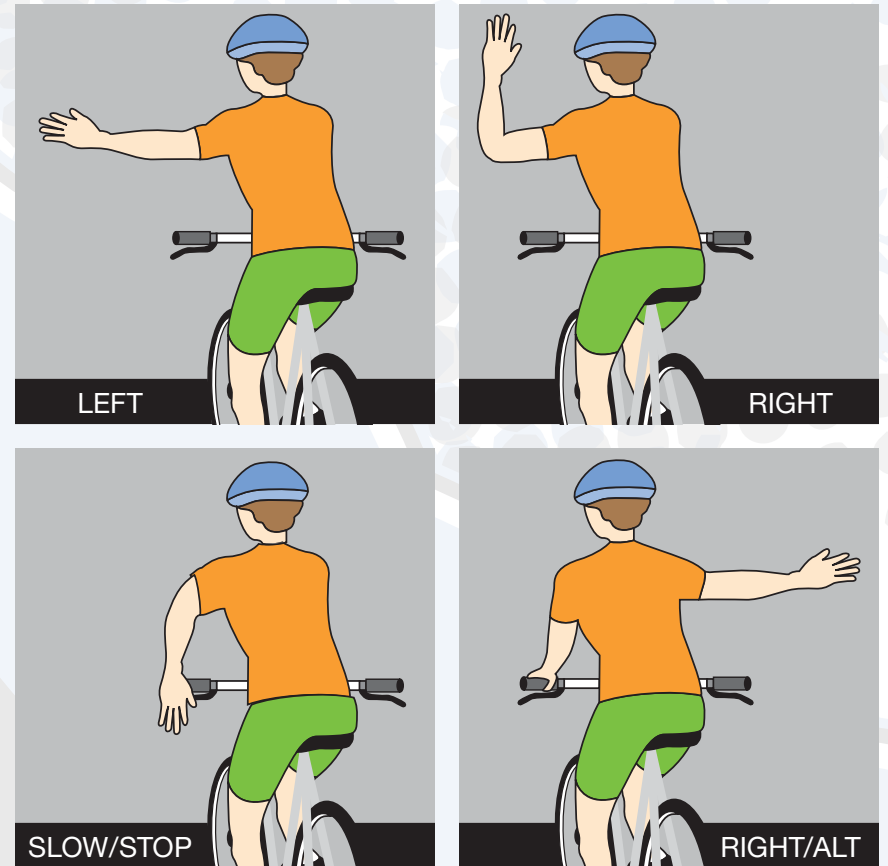
BIKE RULES

BE PREDICTABLE.

- Ride in the same direction as cars. (VC21650.1) Drivers are not looking for wrong way bicyclists.
- Follow the same rules of the road as drivers of cars, such as stopping at stop signs, signaling, etc. (VC 21200)
- Ride on the road. Sidewalks are for pedestrians and those going walking speed – not for bicyclists riding fast

Hand Signals

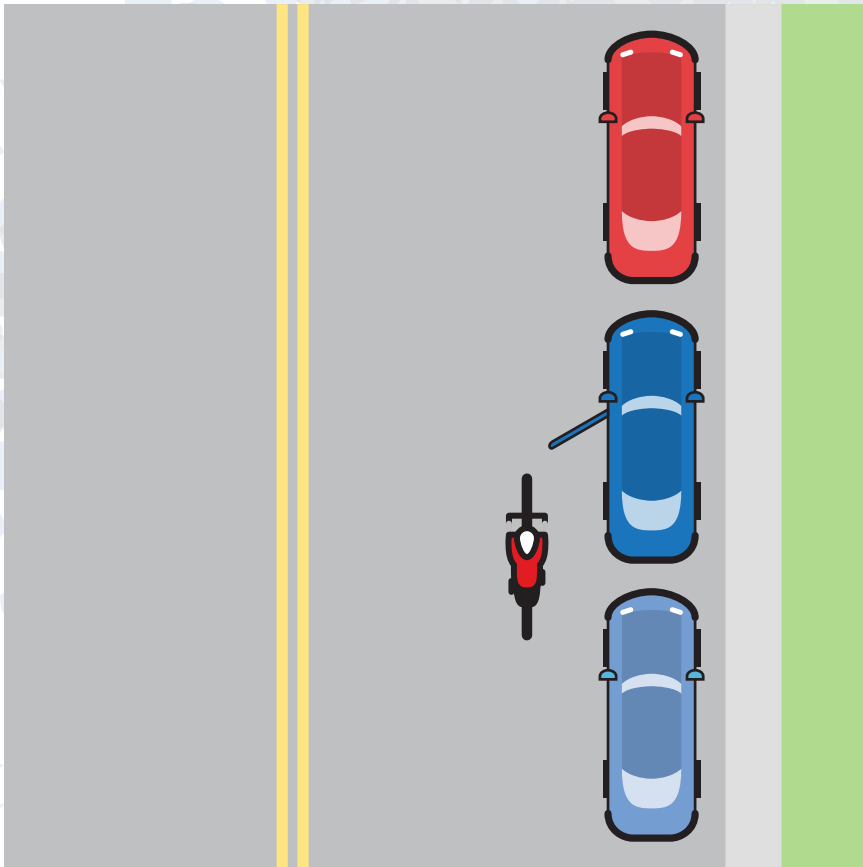
Use proper hand signals to let drivers and others know which way you will be moving. (VC 22111) **BE PREDICTABLE.**



There are two ways to signal a right hand turn. See the diagram labeled Right/Alt for the second way used only by bicyclists.

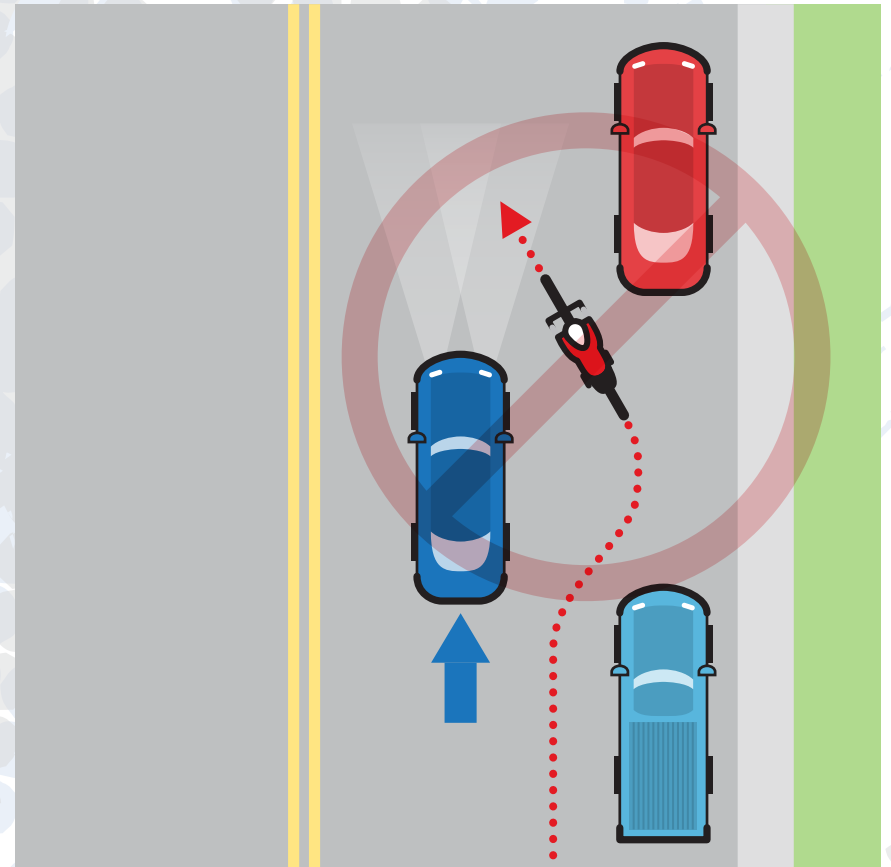
Door Zone

Ride in a straight line and stay out of the **DOOR ZONE**. Ride far enough from parked cars so you can avoid suddenly opened doors. Riding in a straight line allows others to anticipate what you are likely to do.



Ride a Straight Line

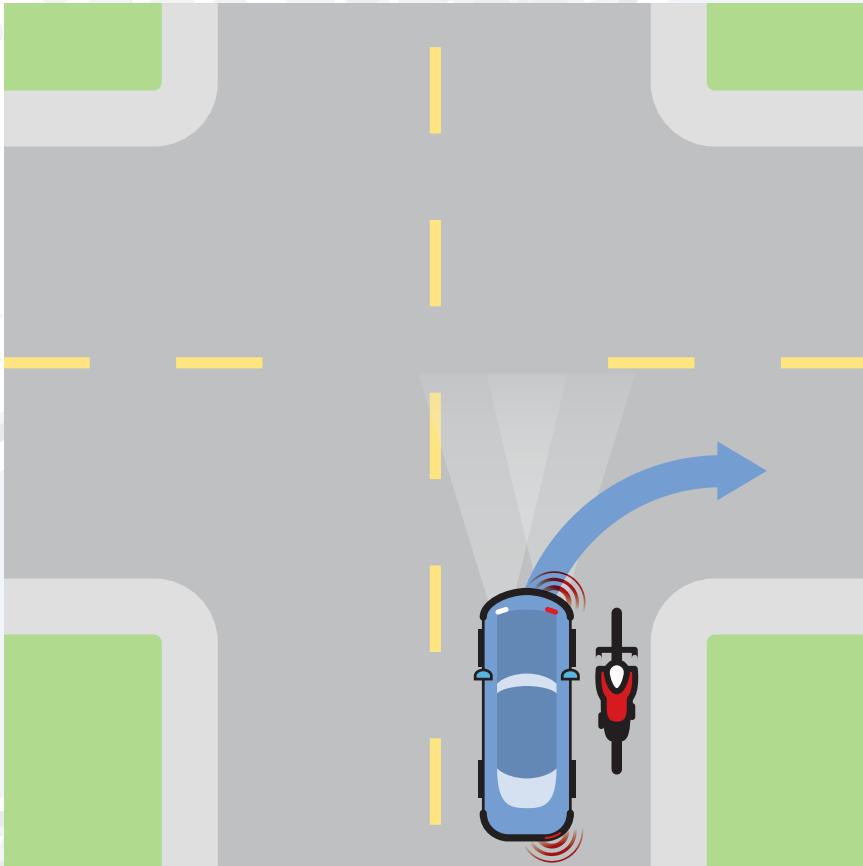
Don't weave between parked cars. Don't ride toward the curb between parked cars, unless they are very far apart. **BE PREDICTABLE.** Drivers may not see you when you move in and out of traffic.



Right Turns

For right hand turns, stay in the right lane, glance behind for other traffic before making the turn.

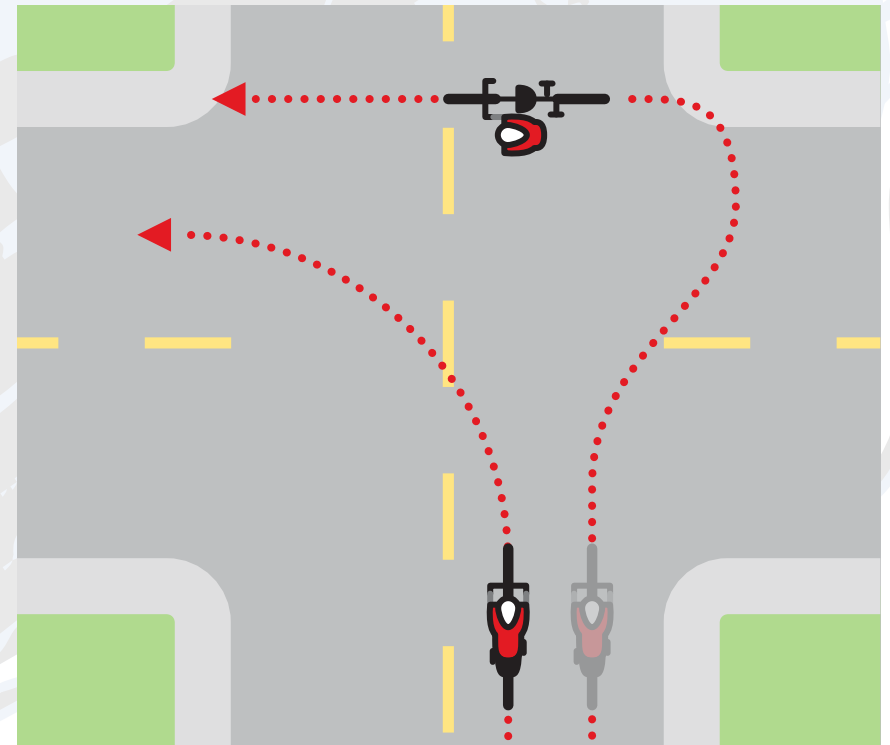
If going straight, carefully move a few feet to the left when approaching an intersection. Be alert for cars that may turn right across your path.



Left Turns

Choose the best way to turn left.

1. Like the driver of a car, signal and move to the left side of the lane, and turn left. (This left turn is for experienced riders only.)
2. Like a pedestrian, use the crosswalk and walk the bike across. (This is safest for new riders.)
3. Use a box turn or 90 degree turn. Ride through the intersection to the far corner. Stop and position your bike in the new direction. Yield to oncoming traffic or wait for the green signal, where there is a traffic signal. Ride your bike across the intersection. (This is good for new riders and busy intersections with multiple lanes of traffic.)



Reminders for Bicyclists

- Never carry things that would prevent you from putting at least one hand on the handlebars of the bicycle. (VC 21205) To be safe, keep 2 hands on the handlebars when possible.
- Hitching rides on a car is against the law for bicyclists, scooters and skateboards. (VC 21203)
- Each rider of a bicycle must have a seat; double riding is not allowed. (VC 21204 (b))
- Riding a bicycle requires your full attention ... do not ride with headphones in both ears. (VC 37400)
- Stay focused and stay alert. Ride defensively; try to anticipate and predict what motorists may do.
- Keep your bicycle in good condition.



SHARE THE ROAD TIPS FOR MOTORISTS'S

Bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists on the road. (VC21220(a)) Here are some helpful hints for motorists:

What to Expect – By law, bicyclists should ride in the same direction as car traffic. However, you should also be on the lookout for uneducated bicyclists on the sidewalk and moving in the opposite direction from car traffic. Also be on the lookout for small children on bicycles, moving at the speed of pedestrians.

Give Adequate Space – In conditions where there is not enough room for the bicyclist to ride to the right, they are allowed in the lane of traffic.

Passing – Wait until it is safe to pass a bicyclist. You should allow ample space between your vehicle and the bicyclist. If you pass too closely, the draft from your car can pull a bicyclist off course and cause the rider to swerve out of control. Thus, the three foot rule is recommended – give the bicycle a minimum of three feet when passing.

Turning Right – Watch out for bicyclists when turning right. A bicyclist may be to the right of you and planning to go straight at the same intersection. The bicyclist may be going faster than you think. As you slow to make the turn, the bicyclist may not be able to avoid crashing into the passenger side of your car.

Turning Left – Look for bicyclists when making a left hand turn. Bicyclists who are crossing straight through the same intersection in the opposite direction may be going faster than you realize.

Backing Up – When backing out of your driveway, look to see if someone is riding (or walking) in your path. Children on bikes are especially hard to see. LOOK BOTH WAYS before backing up.

Check the Door Zone – After parallel parking, use the rear view mirror and turn around to look for bicyclists riding along side of your car or approaching quickly, before opening the door.

Honk Only When Necessary – If the need arises to honk your horn to alert a bicyclist that you are about to pass, do so at a respectful distance. Honking too close may cause the bicyclist to lose his bearing and create a hazardous situation for you both.

Signaling – Always use turn signals before turning, changing lanes or pulling out from the curb.

Challenge Number 3

You are driving your car along a four lane road with a center divider. You notice a pedestrian on the sidewalk wanting to cross mid-block, but there is lots of fast moving traffic on both sides of the street. Should you stop and motion the pedestrian to cross?

The expert says ...

NO! This is a dangerous place to cross, and pedestrians should cross at the intersections. If you stop in the middle of the block you may be rear ended, or the pedestrian may be hit by one of the other cars.

Watch for Pedestrians – Tips for Motorists

- Watch for pedestrians at all times by scanning the road and sides of the road ahead for pedestrians.
- Stop or yield to pedestrians at crosswalks, whether marked or unmarked. An unmarked crosswalk is a place where a crosswalk would be placed between two corners, but has not been painted/marked.
- Stop or yield to pedestrians when making a right or left turn at intersections.
- Do not park in crosswalks.
- Never pass or overtake a vehicle that is stopped for pedestrians.
- Always be prepared to stop for pedestrians in residential areas and near schools.

Right Turn on Red

In intersections where “Right Turn on Red” is permitted, yield for pedestrians that may be stepping off the curb as the light turns green for them.

As you attempt to merge with moving traffic on the crossing street, you will be looking away from the corner and towards oncoming traffic. Check for pedestrians before completing your turn.

A FEW GUIDELINES FOR MOTORIZED SCOOTERS

- Riders must be 16 years old and have a license or instructional permit to operate a motorized scooter. (VC21235(d))
- The motorized scooter speed limit is 15 mph. (VC22411)
- Scooters may be ridden on a street with a speed limit of 25 mph or less and may not be ridden on the sidewalk. (VC21235b)
- During darkness, a front light, and front and rear reflectors are required. (VC21223)
- Don't forget – helmets are required to scooter too! (VC21212(a))

Law Enforcement Agencies Participating in Juvenile Traffic Diversion

Campbell Police Department
Gilroy Police Department
Los Altos Police Department
Los Gatos-Monte Sereno Police Department
Milpitas Police Department
Mountain View Police Department
Morgan Hill Police Department
Palo Alto Police Department
Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office
Santa Clara Police Department
Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety

Funding for this project was provided by a grant
from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through
the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



In Santa Clara County
Sobrato Center for Nonprofits – San Jose
1400 Parkmoor Avenue, Suite 120B, San Jose, CA 95126
Phone: (408) 793-2730 • Fax: (408) 793-2731

www.sccphd.org/traffic