

Q: I have always kept to the right side of the road on a bike to enable motorists to pass. But Toronto Police stated in the Star that cyclists are entitled to use the full lane and ride wherever in the lane they wish. Doesn't this contradict the Highway Traffic Act?

A: *Sgt. Tim Burrows of Toronto Police Traffic Services replies:*

There actually isn't a contradiction. What's missing is the complete answer, which often gets overlooked.

Section 147(1) HTA states that *"any vehicle travelling upon a roadway at less than the normal speed of traffic at that time and place shall, where practicable, 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."*

So, bicycles have to stay in the right lane and as close to the curb or edge of roadway as practicable. However, when a bicycle has to move left inside the lane to avoid curbside obstacles or pass parked vehicles, they are legally within their right to do so.

On a narrow two-lane street with parked cars on one side, it's sensible that a cyclist would take or block the driving lane to avoid being "squeezed" between passing cars on their left and parked cars on their right.

Yes, drivers may honk and scream, but a cyclist is well within the law – as long as they move over when safe to do so.

Toronto Star, October 24, 2009