

# Lawyer reaches out to cyclists

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## LEGAL ISSUES

### Expert says riders treated like 'second-class citizens'



**Luke Simcoe**  
Metro | Toronto

For cyclists injured in an accident, navigating the legal system can be as hard as biking through downtown Toronto during rush hour, says lawyer Patrick Brown.

"The system can be very complicated and a lot of cyclists don't know what entitlements they have," he said.

That's why Brown, an ardent cycling advocate, has partnered with Cycle Toronto to offer free legal advice to local cyclists.

Cyclists with legal questions, whether it's about fines, the rules of the road or what to do after an accident, can contact Brown at his firm, McLeish Orlando, or can contact him on Twitter (@patrickbrownllb) using the #LegalSpin hashtag.

"I know about cycling law, and it's important for me to give back to the community," he said.

Brown has been doing pro



**Patrick Brown** CONTRIBUTED

bono work for cyclists for years, and was part of the legal team that prompted the Ontario coroner to issue a report on cycling and pedestrian deaths in 2013.

He says he gets about five calls a week from concerned cyclists.

"Most don't need a lawyer, they just need some good advice," he said.

Common queries include whether or not cyclists have to show ID when stopped by



**I've never had a case where a cyclist has killed a car driver.**

Patrick Brown

## + ADVICE

If you're a cyclist who's been involved in a collision, lawyer Patrick Brown says you should take the following steps:

1. Get medical attention if required.
2. Call the police.
3. Locate witnesses.
4. Get the driver's information.
5. Take photos of the scene, the car and your bicycle.

"Sometimes the police have a lot of work to do, so you have to do your own little investigation on the scene," Brown said.

police (they don't) or if drivers involved in a collision must pay for damage to a cyclist's bike (they do).

Brown has often represented the families of cyclists killed or seriously injured in collisions with vehicles.

Although the Ontario Highway Traffic Act says cyclists have equal rights to the road, they're still treated like "second-class citizens" by the legal system, he said.

"In a large number of those cases, the courts convict the driver for an unsafe turn or failure to yield and give them an \$85 fine," he said. "It's unjust."