

### Some advice on cycling on German roads

On at least two days of the rally we will be riding on German roads and I thought that the following notes may be helpful to you.

Generally, where a cycle path is provided adjacent to a road, cycles are required to use the path when one of the following three signs is present:



Cycle Path



Combined footpath  
and cycle path



Separate cycle path  
footpath

Obviously you do not have to use these if they are unridable, for example due to broken glass. Should you choose not to ride on the designated cycle path then you can be directed to do so by a policeman. Should you have an accident on the road and there was a cycle path which you should have been using, this will be taken into account.

The Germans are much more relaxed about cyclists riding on the pedestrian pavements than the British, particularly where children are concerned. Children up to eight years old *must* ride on the footpath. Children *may* legally ride on the footpath until they are 10 years old.

You will see many adults riding their cycles in the pedestrian areas in the cities. Although this is tolerated to a degree, it is illegal and you could get fined 5€ if you cycle through a town's shopping area during the very rare times when the police are having one of their clamp downs. Most people are prepared to take the risk.



Of course, if you see a sign like this:

then you are fully entitled to cycle in a pedestrian area.

When riding on the cycle paths, you are expected to obey the relevant traffic lights at intersections. This will usually mean waiting for the green bicycle to be lit. Do not cross on red unless you wish for an angry confrontation demanding that you set a good example to the children!

In cities, if there is a cycle path each side of a road, you are usually expected to use the path to your right, as per normal traffic flow (unless the cycle path has a two way traffic flow arrow). This is not always easy or convenient because it can mean crossing and re-crossing busy roads. If you do end up riding on the "wrong" side, there is no hard and fast rule about which side to pass oncoming cyclists. Many riders will pull onto the adjacent pedestrian path, others will keep right. We usually find that the tandem causes enough attention that we can keep riding straight ahead by keeping to the right.

When riding on the roads, the regulations are somewhat different to Britain. A single cycle can only be overtaken when there is sufficient space to give him a metre or so clearance. Generally German drivers seem to follow this rule, but do not expect the Dutch and Luxembourg drivers to be so polite.

A group of 15 cyclists (i.e. 8 tandems) may ride together so that they travel two abreast and in a tight bunch to form one "vehicle". Where there is more than one group of riders, they must leave sufficient space to the group in front for overtaking traffic to be able to safely pull in.

Because the group forms one vehicle, should traffic lights change after the lead riders have gone through, then the rest of the group must follow because they form a single vehicle. Similarly for turning left across traffic, the group makes one vehicle. It is usual for one rider to dismount and stop the traffic for the whole group to safely cross/turn. Although he has no legal right to stop the traffic, we've always found this to be perfectly acceptable.

Please note that there are two types of "No Entry" sign in use. This one is at the end of a one way street and often has the magic sign allowing cyclists to ignore it:



The other one is the more general prohibition sign:



This caused quite a stir a few years ago in Holland, when a colleague from England didn't realise what it meant and thought that the locals were all being very friendly by waving to him on his drive

to work every morning. It means that all traffic is forbidden. You will often see it in combination

with  and, of course, 

The former means that access is for residents only. The latter means that cyclists can enter.

Lastly, please do be careful about "Priority To The Right". Traffic in residential areas is forced to go slowly by having to yield to each road which enters from the right. If you do not see either of these two signs:



then the traffic entering from the right has priority. This applies even if the road coming from the right seems much smaller than the road you are on. Be aware of this! You will be riding on quiet back roads which have many roads intersecting from the right. If there is no yellow diamond, they have right of way over you. Your first rides out will be through villages in Luxembourg which generally put in yield signs in the same way as you are used to in England. Please bear in mind the change of custom for the rides in Germany.

The above guidance was prepared with the gratefully accepted input and assistance of the members of [liste@tandem-fahren.de](mailto:liste@tandem-fahren.de), especially Martin, Alexander, Peter and Lothar.