

NEWS RELEASE

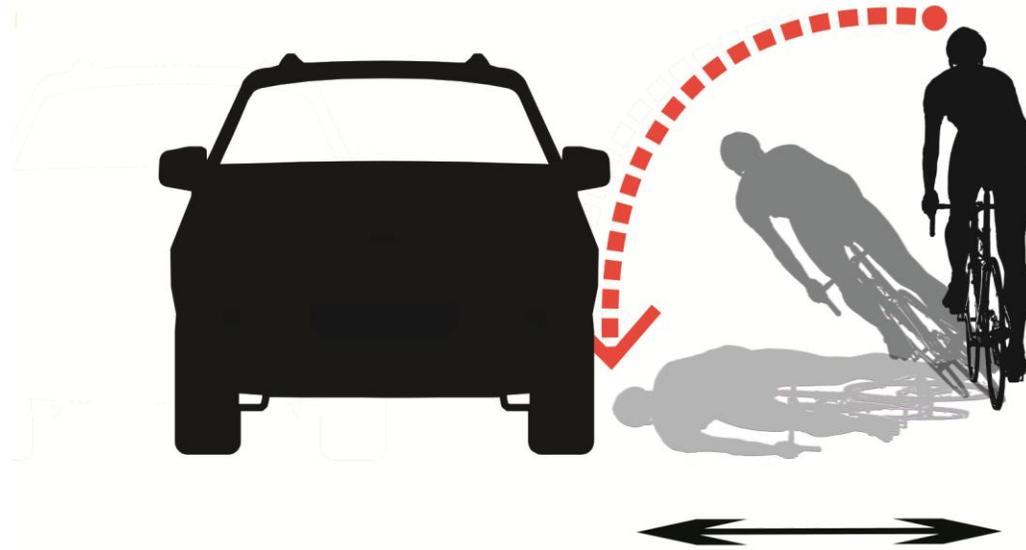
SUBJECT: Bike Club Pushes for Motorists to Follow the Law

DATE: August 23, 2016

Siskiyou Velo, a local non-profit bike club and advocacy organization, has initiated a public education campaign focused on improving motorists' awareness and adherence to the State's bike passing law. Velo's members have found that most Southern Oregon motor vehicle drivers pass people riding bicycles in a safe and respectful manner. But too often, drivers pass too close and in violation of the law.

Adopted into law in 2007, ORS 811.065 establishes a safe haven for people riding bikes so that if they were to fall into the lane of traffic the following motorist would not run over the fallen cyclist (see illustration below).

SAFE PASSING. IT'S THE LAW IN OREGON.



Oregon law ORS 811.065 requires motor vehicle drivers to pass bicyclists with enough room to avoid running over the cyclists if they were to fall into the lane.

The Velo is sending notification of the law to fleet operators in Jackson and Josephine Counties asking that they inform their drivers of the law's requirements. The mailing includes firms and public agencies that together own and operate more than 30,000 vehicles.

A motorist must almost always use part of the adjacent lane in order to provide sufficient distance to safely pass a bicyclist, even if that means crossing over a double yellow line. The law allows for the motorist to drive to the left of the center of the roadway to accomplish this—when it's safe to do so. What happens when there is oncoming traffic and it is unsafe to pass? Then motorists must slow down, follow behind the person riding the bicycle, and wait until it's safe to pass.

This law applies where vehicle speeds are greater than 35 mph. It does not apply where there are designated bike lanes (which are almost always confined to urban areas and are clearly marked by a wide 8 inch wide exclusive lane stripe, bike symbol, and arrow). Where ORS 811.065 does not apply, a safe minimum distance to pass a cyclist is generally considered to be three feet.