



Q&A

Your technical, health and legal queries answered by Cycle's experts



Left and top right: Getty Images

Q 'Causing death by dangerous cycling' is apparently being added to the statute books in England and Wales, and a cyclist could be jailed for life for this. It seems like using a populist sledgehammer to crack a nut – more people are killed by lightning each year than by cyclists. On a practical level, however, I'd like to know what the test is for deciding what dangerous cycling is. I'd also like to know what defence a cyclist so charged could offer. I'm not defending cycling that clearly is dangerous but there have been instances where pedestrians have obviously stepped out in front of cyclists.

Name and address supplied

The headline 'cyclists who kill pedestrians by riding dangerously could be sentenced to life' has prompted celebration and horror in equal measure. The change is not yet approved by Parliament. You are not alone in thinking that this is a disproportionate response to the problem. Cycling UK has looked at all the relevant offences and the confusing state of the law on the website: cyclinguk.org/road-traffic-offences.

The question about what amounts to dangerous riding is complex. It is the objective standard of cycling far below the standard of a notional competent and careful cyclist. The exact requirements of the offence are not yet finalised.

As regards defences, there is the obvious one: 'the collision was not my fault'. Evidence such as CCTV/camera recordings and witness statements will help with this. If there was a mechanical issue with the bike which caused the incident, it will be necessary to show you did not know and could not have known about the problem.

Nadia Kerr

Q The industry seems to have decided that we must all go tubeless. That means a very tight fit between tyre and rim, which is a problem for those of us using tubes. What might be an improvement?

Mark Shelton

An innertube is an unwanted interloper in a tubeless tyre and rim system. It makes the tough job of tyre removal or installation even tougher, as it can prevent the tyre bead dropping into the rim trough. Better is to use a tube-type tyre if using an innertube, to invest in a pair of wheels with non-tubeless rims, or both.

Richard Hallett

Q In 2022 I bought a Cube Kathmandu e-bike. After just 1,800 miles on roads and firm cycle tracks, the gears started to slip. The dealer replaced the chainring, chain and cassette, which solved the problem. Is this low drivetrain mileage typical?

Steve Richards

Your bike is powered by a Bosch motor putting out a hefty 85Nm of torque. Located at the bottom bracket, it sends power to the back wheel through the transmission and puts a heavy load on them, especially in the high-power setting. Manufacturers are now offering transmission components built to withstand the demands of e-bikes with bottom bracket motors; fitting them may improve matters. E-cycles using motors in the front or rear hub should get the same transmission life as regular pedal cycles as no extra load is put through the chain and sprockets.

Richard Hallett