



Q&A

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



Left: Roo Fowler

Q I cycle along a combined pedestrian/cycle path. At each of many side roads, I am forced to surrender my right of way, which I would have by staying on the main road. The Highway Code now gives pedestrians right of way across side roads where it meets a main road. Do you know if cyclists on a shared-use path have the same right of way as pedestrians at side roads?

Seth Kay

We have had the 'new' Highway Code rules since 29 January 2022, and these introduced the concept of the hierarchy of road users. The Code defines vulnerable road users and provides guidance for their protection.

On the specific point you raise, Rule H2 specifies that priority is given to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross a road into which someone is turning. This rule does not specify cyclists.

However, if we look at Rule 76 and Rule H3, we can see that priority is given to cyclists going straight ahead whether that is on the road, in a cycle lane or on a cycle track (see also Rules 61 and 62). Of course, many shared-use paths have give-way markings on the surface as you approach the side road and you will need to comply with those markings.

On the issue of shared-use paths, note that cyclists should give way to pedestrians (see Rule 63). Rule H2 also says that 'pedestrians may use any part of the road and use cycle tracks as well as the pavement, unless there are signs prohibiting pedestrians'.

Nadia Kerr

Q I recently found the Presta valves seized on my bike and that of my partner. We are fair-weather cyclists. A pair of pliers later, three were freed but one broke. What is the best way to avoid the problem?

Richard Freeth

Road-salt-induced corrosion can seize the little nuts on your Presta valves. Rinsing the entire bike with clean, cold water after a ride helps prevent corrosion. Frequent loosening, as when topping up air pressure, will also lessen the likelihood of valves seizing.

For fair-weather cyclists, it's unlikely that corrosion is the problem. Perhaps you have over-tightened the nuts? Little force is needed. Presta valves are indeed fragile; Schwalbe's Clik valve system (schwalbe.com/en/klik-valve) looks a lot tougher and easier to use and can be retro-fitted to Presta (and Schrader) valve stems.

Richard Hallett

Q I've been getting through cup-and-cone freehubs on my Shimano-equipped 8-speed bike at a rate of one a year. Can you recommend a durable, simple-to-maintain rear hub?

Tom Burton

Shimano hubs at all price points are well sealed; I have several Shimano 105 hubs a decade or more old. Improved longevity can be obtained by opening the hub before first use and ensuring the bearings have an adequate grease fill, as this is often on the light side as supplied by the factory.

Use Shimano's own grease to ensure compatibility with the stuff already in there unless you degrease everything first.

Richard Hallett