

The Idaho Stop Law is a traffic provision that basically allows bicycles to proceed at a slow speed through stop signs if the coast is clear. As cycling for transport becomes more organized and popular, many cycling advocates across the country are hoping for similar changes to the traffic code in their state. Oregon considered a bill this year.

The basic reasoning of the law is hard to translate to the non-cyclist, but this animation by Spencer Boomhower does a fantastic job of making it all come together:

<http://urbanvelo.org/bicycle-rolling-stop-animation-idaho-stop-law>

The state of Idaho treats stop signs as yield signs for cyclists. Idaho Code Title 49, Chapter 7 contains the guidance:

<http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/idstat/Title49/T49CH7SECT49-720.htm>.

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After one summer of police stings on bikes running stop signs, and a lot of talk, we have reached a reasonable peace treaty on this issue.

Local law enforcement here in Jackson Hole will ticket a bike that blatantly rolls a stop at speed with no care. Quick \$100 fine, and no sympathy from bike advocates like me.

Legally, bikes are required to stop at stop signs in Wyoming. However, Jackson Police and Teton County Sheriff have publicly said they will not ticket a bicyclist that:

- slows cautiously as approaching a stop sign,
- rider carefully looks left and right, fully in control and able to stop,
- rider signals properly if making a turn,
- rider does not fully stop but continues after determining it is safe to do so.

Our Sheriff and police have determined this is equal to a stop and they will not harass cyclists. We agree.

What I continue to take issue with is the targeting of bicyclists running stop signs, while far more dangerous motor vehicle violations like red light running go on without anywhere near the attention. One is mostly a visual impact on cranky drivers but rarely a true safety hazard, while red light running is extremely dangerous. That does not make sense to me.

Tim Young
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The argument can (legitimately) be made that a slow rolling stop is actually safer for both bike and motorist. The reason being is that it reduces exposure of the cyclist to threat of collision. How?

- For a bicyclist to stop completely they must then fully regain all momentum from a dead stop which means a considerably longer time in the intersection (exposure) getting up to speed and clearing the intersection. A difference of only a few KPH makes a big difference in exposure.
- A bicyclist risks "slipping" a pedal, meaning that as they push off and put their foot back in/on the pedal, they risk having their foot slip off the pedal. This is especially true of road cycling shoes with a hard sole and cleat. This in turn again delays their crossing (increasing exposure) and also contributes to the risk of actually crashing in the intersection as their foot slips off the pedal and they lose control and topple over.
- A bicyclist using toe clips or clipless pedals with cleats has to focus on getting their foot engaged with the pedal while in the intersection, again increasing exposure, while also not being able to pay full attention to actually navigating the intersection.
- Full stop requirements are a result of motor vehicles which have much more mass to stop, and in turn which can do much greater damage in a collision. Ticketing bicyclist for low-speed (>15KPH) rolling stops is often a result of bias. Stopping is secondary to yielding, and the police should be focusing on whether the bicyclists are yielding to vehicles when required as opposed to the technicality of a full stop if it is not contributing to any diminishment of safety.

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It is by riding a bicycle that you learn the contours of a country best, since you have to sweat up the hills and coast down them. Thus you remember them as they actually are, while in a motor vehicle, only a high hill impresses you, and you have no such accurate remembrance of country you have driven through as you gain by riding a bicycle.

Ernest Hemingway