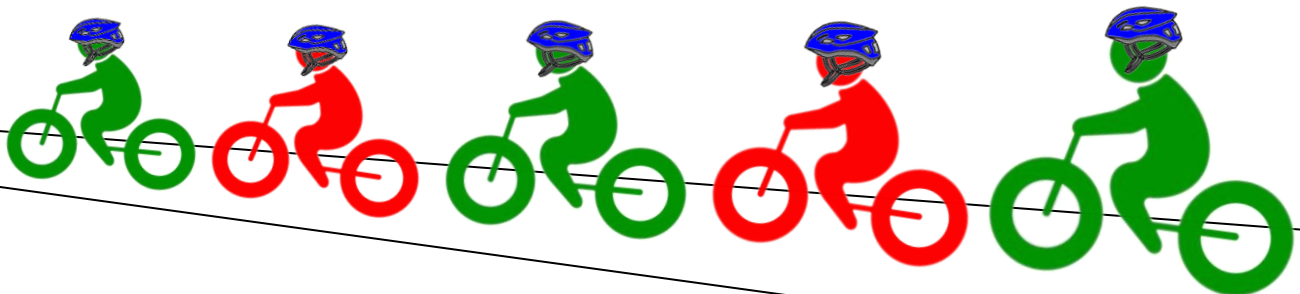


Cycling Rulebook

This guide covers essential information for everyone, such as:

- Basic rules of cycling
- Guidelines regarding traffic enforcement for bicycle violations



Nagano Police Headquarters
Traffic Planning Division

The **Blue Ticket (Traffic Fine System)** has been applied to cyclists **aged 16 and older** for traffic violations since April 1, 2026.



What is the Traffic Fine System?

- This system applies to traffic violations that a police officer actually witnesses and clearly identifies as an offense, such as running a red light or stop sign violation (these are categorized as "traffic infractions"). Under this system, if you pay the required penalty fine within a specified period, the case will be resolved without the need for a criminal trial or a family court hearing.
- When you commit a violation, a police officer will issue you a payment slip for the penalty fine and a traffic violation notice, which is commonly known as the **Blue Ticket**.

Background

- Due to a large number of bicycle accidents, the police have been tightening crackdowns on traffic violations to reduce these incidents. Previously, when a bicycle violation was issued, the case was processed through criminal proceedings using the **Red Ticket**.
- However, compared to the Blue ticket process, the criminal proceedings involves a much heavier burden in terms of time and paperwork. Therefore, to reduce the burden on both violators and the police, it was decided to introduce the Blue Ticket system for bicycles, just as it is for cars.



Talking about the legal procedures can make it sound complicated, but the true purpose of introducing the **Blue Ticket** system for bicycles is to deter traffic accidents involving bicycles.

Traffic Violation Proceedings Under the Blue Ticket System

In principle, when a police officer spots a bicycle traffic violation, they will issue a warning and guidance right on the spot. However, if the violation is malicious or dangerous—posing a high risk or nuisance to pedestrians and other vehicles, and potentially causing a traffic accident—it will be subject to issuing the **Red Ticket** or **Blue Ticket**.

Examples of violations subject to criminal proceedings (such as receiving the Red Ticket)



Tailgating.

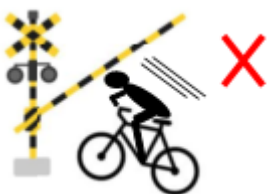


Using a smartphone while riding and causing a danger on the road.



Causing a traffic accident as a result of a violation, such as colliding with a pedestrian after riding a bicycle hands-free.

Examples of violations subject to the Blue Ticket



Brakeless



Traffic infractions, such as entering a closed railroad crossing, riding with defective brakes, or using a smartphone while riding, which carry a high risk of leading to serious accidents.



When the danger of an accident is heightened: For example, entering an intersection by running a red light and forcing a vehicle proceeding on a green light to slam on its brakes, or ignoring a stop sign while holding an umbrella, thereby creating an actual hazard to traffic.



When a violation is committed intentionally despite being guided or warned: For example, continuing to ride on the right side of the road against a police officer's instructions, or spotting a police officer conducting enforcement ahead but ignoring them and running a red light without giving the officer even a moment to issue a warning.

Bicycles on Sidewalks

Standard bicycles* are allowed to ride on sidewalks in the following cases:

- ① When **road signs or markings** indicate that standard bicycles are allowed to ride on sidewalks.



- ② When the cyclist is a child/toddler (under 13 years old), a senior citizen (70 years old or older), or a person with physical disabilities who makes riding on the roadway difficult.

- ③ When it is deemed unavoidable to ride on the sidewalk in order to ensure safety, considering the conditions of the roadway or traffic.

What does "deemed unavoidable" mean?

- When it is difficult to ride on the left side of the roadway due to ongoing roadwork, a continuous row of parked vehicles, etc.
- When there is a risk of a collision with overtaking vehicles due to heavy traffic and a narrow roadway.

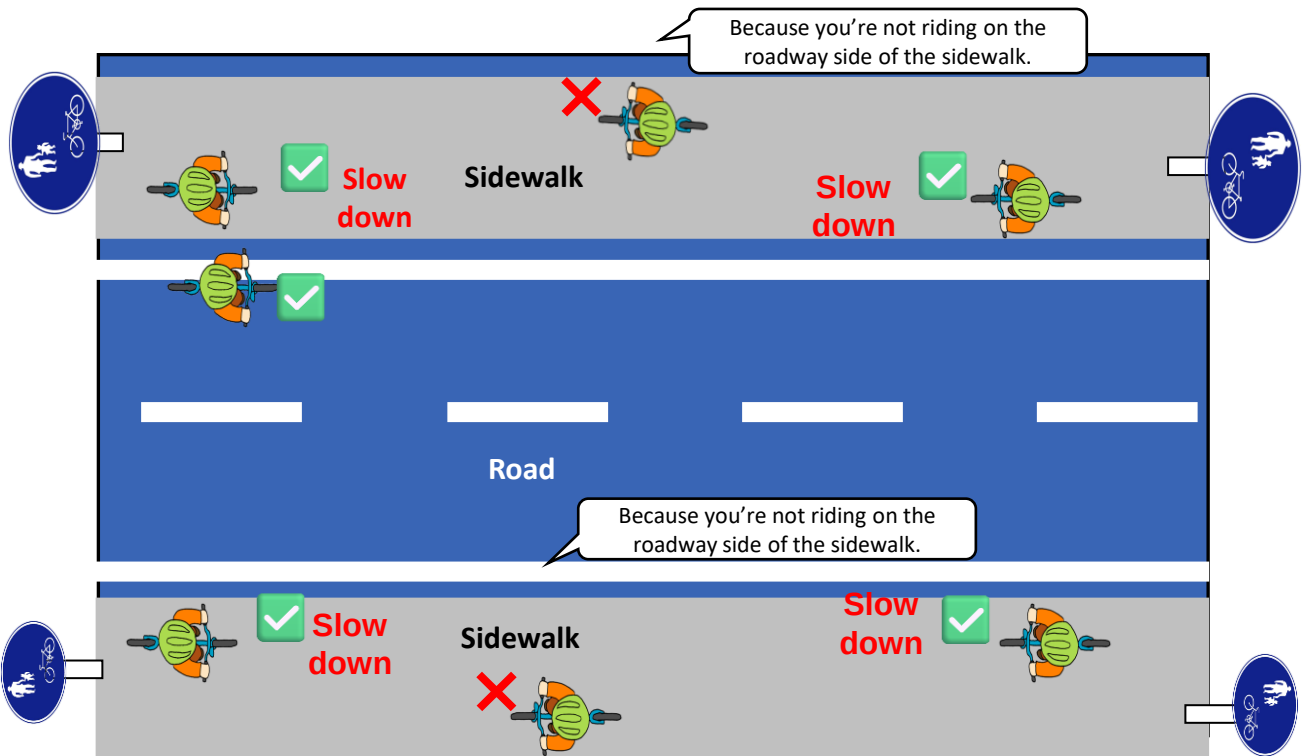
However, even in these cases, you cannot ride on the sidewalk if a police officer instructs you not to do so.

*A "standard bicycle" refers to a bicycle that meets the following criteria regarding its body size and structure, and is not towing any other vehicle:

1. The body size is within 190 cm in length and 60 cm in width.
2. It has four wheels or fewer.
3. It does not have a sidecar (excluding training wheels).
4. It has only one driver's seat and no other seating capacity (excluding child seats).
5. The brakes are in position where they can be easily operated while riding.
6. There are no sharp protrusions that could pose a danger to pedestrians.

Rules for Riding on Sidewalks

When riding on the sidewalk, you must ride at a reduced speed on the half of the sidewalk closer to the roadway.



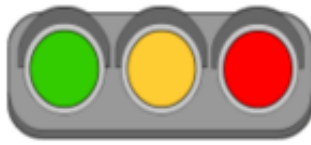
You must stop if you might block pedestrians.

In case of a violation: Failure to slow down on the sidewalk
(classified as a traffic infraction)

Penalty fine: 3,000 yen

Traffic Signals to Follow for Bicycles

● **When riding on the roadway:** Follow the vehicle traffic lights.

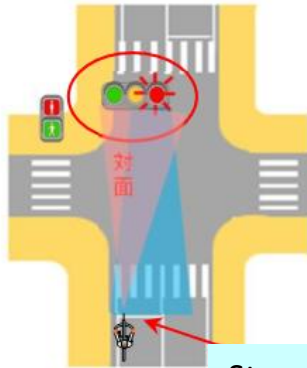


● **When riding on a crosswalk:** Follow the pedestrian traffic lights.



Special Rule: If the pedestrian lights have a sign that reads "Pedestrians and Bicycles Only" (歩行者・自転車専用), you must follow the pedestrian lights—even if you are riding on the roadway.

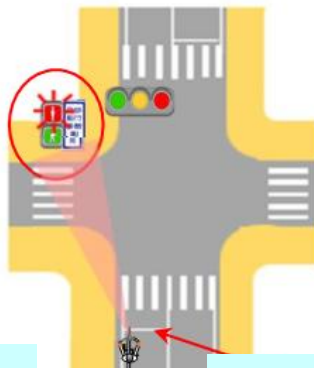
When riding on the roadway



Stopping point

Follow the vehicle traffic lights and stop at the stop line.

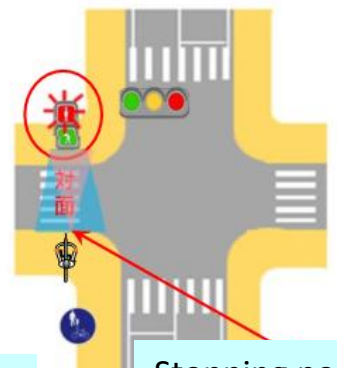
Exception for the roadway



Stopping point

If there is a sign that reads "Pedestrians and Bicycles Only" (歩行者・自転車専用), follow the pedestrian traffic lights and stop at the stop line.

When riding on a crosswalk



Stopping point

Follow the pedestrian traffic lights and stop just before the intersection.

In case of a violation: Failure to obey traffic lights (classified as a traffic infraction)
Penalty fine: 6,000 yen

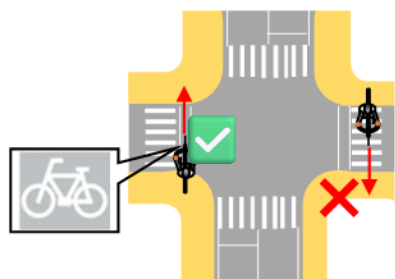
For more details on how to travel through signalized intersections, please visit our website.

<https://www.pref.nagano.lg.jp/police/anshin/jiten/riyou.html#kousaten>



Bicycles on Crosswalks

When crossing the road, you may ride on a crosswalk. However, if there is a risk of blocking or obstructing pedestrians who are crossing, you must not ride your standard bicycle across.



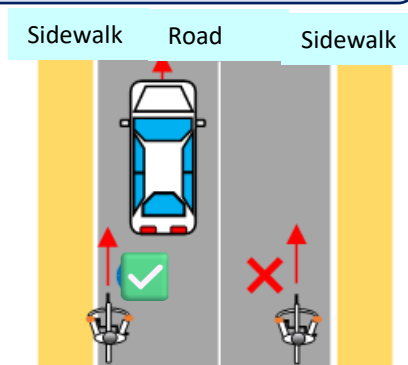
Bicycle crossing

If a dedicated bicycle crossing lane is available, you must use that bicycle crossing lane.

In case of a violation: Illegal crossing at prohibited areas (classified as a traffic infraction)
Penalty fine: 5,000 yen

How to Ride Bicycles on the Road

As a general rule, bicycles must be ridden on the far left side of the roadway. Riding a bicycle on the right side is considered traveling against traffic (riding the wrong way).



In case of a violation: Violation of designated traffic lanes (classified as a traffic infraction)
Penalty fine: 6,000 yen

Riding Bicycles Side by Side

Bicycles must not to ride side by side.



In case of a violation: Riding abreast (classified as a traffic infraction)
Penalty fine: 3,000 yen

Riding Bicycles with Earphones

In Nagano Prefecture, it is prohibited to ride a bicycle while wearing earphones if they prevent you from hearing surrounding sounds.

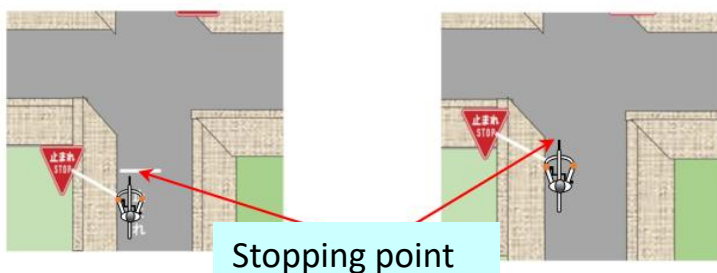


In case of a violation: Violation of Public Safety Commission regulations
(classified as a traffic infraction)

Penalty fine: 5,000 yen

Stop

At intersections with a stop sign, you must stop right before the stop line. If there is no line, stop just before the intersection.



Stop right before the stop line.

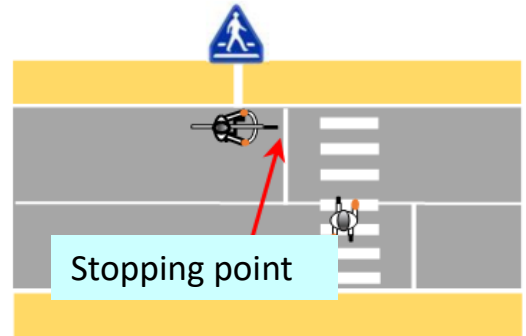
If there is no stop line, stop just before the intersection.

In case of a violation: Stop sign violation (classified as a traffic infraction)

Penalty fine: 5,000 yen

Pedestrian Priority at Crosswalks

When a pedestrian is crossing or about to cross, you must stop just before the crosswalk and must not obstruct their passage.



In case of a violation: Obstructing pedestrians (classified as a traffic infraction)
Penalty fine: 6,000 yen

Prohibition of Riding Double

Riding double (carrying a passenger) on a bicycle is strictly prohibited.



In case of a violation: Violation of passenger or cargo capacity limits for light vehicles (classified as a traffic infraction)
Penalty fine: 3,000 yen



Exception: Under Public Safety Commission regulations, riders aged 16 or older may carry a preschool child in a designated child seat.

Note: Elementary school students cannot be carried in a child seat.

Penalties for Using Smartphones While Riding

Using a mobile phone or smartphone while riding and causing a real traffic danger—such as causing an accident or obstructing pedestrians—is classified as **use of a mobile phone (causing traffic danger)**. This violation carries a penalty of up to 1 year of imprisonment or a fine of up to 300,000 yen.



Even if you do not cause an actual danger, simply holding a phone to make a call or staring at the screen is classified as **use (hold) of a mobile phone (a traffic infraction)**. This is subject to a penalty fine of 12,000 yen.

"Smartphone use while riding" is a highly dangerous act that directly leads to accidents, which is why it carries the **highest penalty fine for bicycles at 12,000 yen**. Never do it!

Times and Locations for Traffic Enforcement

Each police station designates specific areas and routes where preventing bicycle traffic violations and accidents is deemed necessary as Bicycle Enforcement and Awareness Priority Areas/Routes. Focusing on these designated areas and routes, police conduct enforcement and guidance during morning commuting hours and twilight hours around sunset.

Bicycle Enforcement and Awareness Priority Areas/Routes are announced on the Nagano Police website.



<https://www.pref.nagano.lg.jp/police/anshin/koutsu/dokoho/jitensya-jyuutenchikurosen.html>



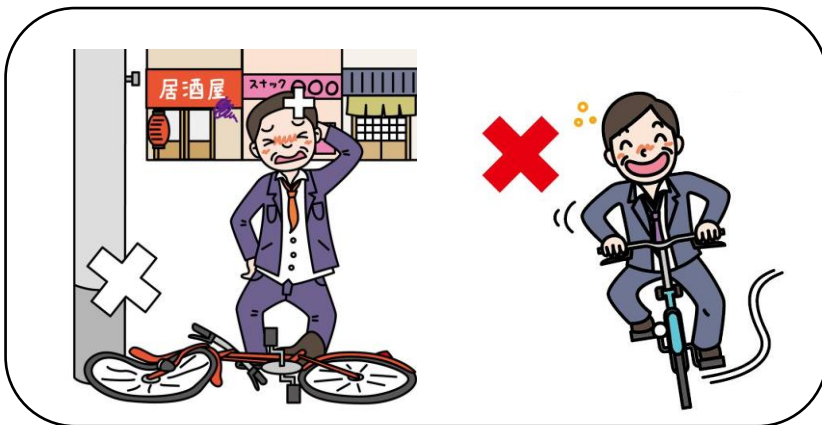
Drunk Riding

- If you are unable to ride safely due to the influence of alcohol, it is classified as drunk riding. This violation carries a penalty of up to 5 years of imprisonment or a fine of up to 1,000,000 yen.
- Additionally, if your blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is 0.3 mg/mL or higher, or your breath alcohol concentration is 0.15 mg/L or higher, it is classified as driving under the influence (DUI). This carries a penalty of up to 3 years of imprisonment or a fine of up to 500,000 yen.
- Providing alcohol to a cyclist, offering a bicycle to someone who has been drinking, or asking/requesting a drunk person for a ride as a passenger are also subject to punishment.

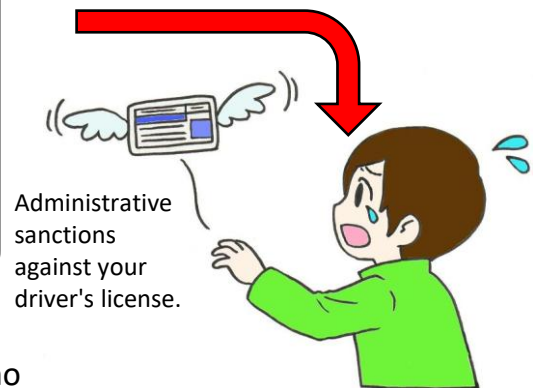


DUI riding on a bicycle is subject to **administrative sanctions** against your driver's license!

You may face penalties such as driver's license suspension!



A minor violation can come with a huge price.



Excerpt from a statement of explanation from someone who received administrative sanctions:

"Operating a bicycle while under the influence of alcohol this time has completely ruined my years of effort toward safe driving. I am deeply ashamed and filled with regret."

Fine !



Bicycles are vehicles too! Obey the traffic rules.

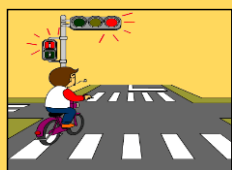
Drunk riding is a crime!

Bicycle Rider Lecture

- The Bicycle Rider Lecture System was introduced to encourage repeat traffic offenders to realize the importance of safe driving and to prevent them from committing dangerous violations again.
- If a person aged 14 or older is caught by the police or causes a traffic accident two or more times within a three-year period for any of the 16 specific traffic violations listed below, the Prefectural Public Safety Commission (hereafter referred to as the "Public Safety Commission") will order them to attend a Bicycle Rider Lecture.

<Traffic Violations Subject to the Bicycle Rider Lecture>

1. Violation of designated traffic lanes
2. Violation of road closures
3. Failure to slow down on pedestrian-only roads
4. Failure to ride at a reduced speed on sidewalks
5. Violation of travel methods on road shoulders
6. Ignoring traffic lights
7. Stop sign violation
8. Obstructing vehicles on priority roads, failure to proceed safely at intersections
9. Failure to yield at intersections
10. Obstructing vehicles in a roundabout, failure to proceed safely in a roundabout
11. Drunk riding, DUI riding
12. Obstructive driving
13. Use of a mobile phone (causing traffic danger / holding)
14. Entering a railroad crossing while the barrier is down
15. Operating a bicycle with defective brakes
16. Violation of the duty of safe driving



Lecture Duration: 3 hours

Lecture Fee: 6,150 yen

If you are ordered by the Public Safety Commission to take the lecture but fail to do so within 3 months, you will be subject to a fine of up to 50,000 yen.

Helmet Wearing

The images below show a traffic accident between a bicycle and a car in Nagano Prefecture.

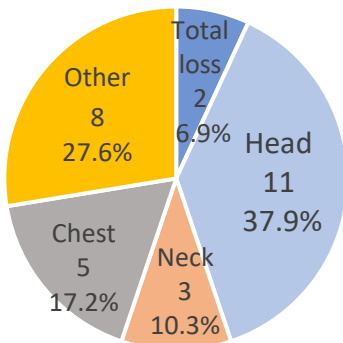


Dent

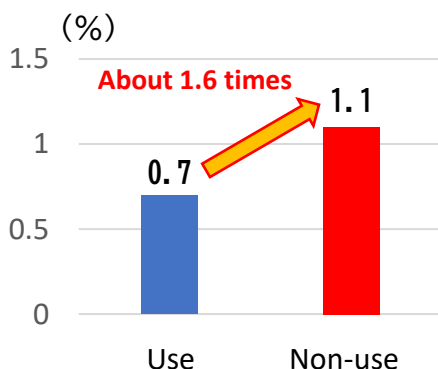


The impact was severe enough to shatter the car's windshield and dent its body. However, because the cyclist was wearing a helmet, they avoided serious injury.

Number of Bicycle Fatalities by Primary Body Region of Injury (2020–2024, Nagano Prefecture)



Comparison of Fatality Rates for Bicycle Injuries with "Head" as the Primary Injured Region, by Helmet Use (Total for 2020–2024, Nagano Prefecture)



Youth isn't over until you get home alive.
After-school hangouts, detours, and goofing around—it all only matters if you make it back.
Protect your life. Wear your helmet.

Approximately 50% of bicycle accident fatalities involve fatal head injuries.

Wearing your helmet properly will protect your life.

Wearing a helmet when riding a bicycle is a "duty to make an effort" under the law. While there are no penalties, please wear one to protect your own life. (The above flyer was created by a university student volunteer of the Nagano Police.)

What we've shared here is just a small part of what we want to tell you. The Nagano Police have published a comprehensive guide on bicycle traffic rules on the website (53 pages in total). Please check via QR code.

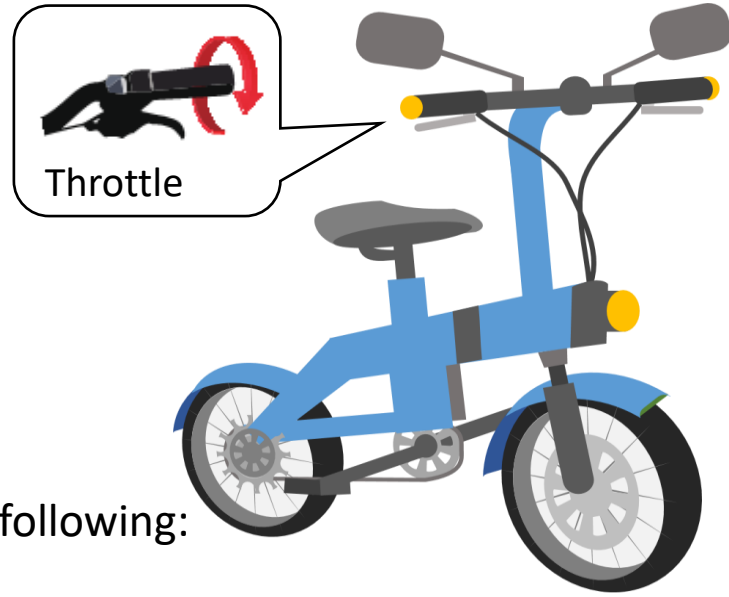


<https://www.pref.nagano.lg.jp/police/anshin/jiten/jitensharulebook.html>



Moped

Vehicles that can run simply by turning a throttle without pedaling are classified as "**electric bicycles with pedals**" (or mopeds) and are treated as standard motorized bicycles (or automobiles) under Japanese law.



To ride one, you must have the following:

- **A valid driver's license**
- **A motorcycle helmet**
- **A registered license plate (properly attached and displayed)**
- **Fitting safety parts, such as turn signals**
- **Mandatory vehicle liability insurance**

If you ride one with the same mindset as a regular bicycle,

you will face penalties for violating the Road Traffic Act (such as driving without a license, operating an improperly equipped vehicle, or riding in prohibited areas), the Act on Securing Compensation for Automobile Accidents (operating an uninsured vehicle), etc.



In addition, rental and sharing services for Specified Small Motorized Bicycles (such as electric scooters) are becoming more widespread.

Since their traffic rules differ from those for bicycles, please check details via QR code.



<https://www.pref.nagano.lg.jp/police/anshin/koutsu/dendoukickboard.html>

