

LETTER: 'Elitists' make all cyclists look bad

North Shore News

August 30, 2015 12:00 AM

Dear Editor:

Re: [Cyclists, It's Time to Grow Up and Learn the Rules of the Road \(http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/letters/letter-cyclists-it-s-time-to-grow-up-and-learn-the-rules-of-the-road-1.1985485\)](http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/letters/letter-cyclists-it-s-time-to-grow-up-and-learn-the-rules-of-the-road-1.1985485), July 1 Mailbox.

(Letter-writer Peter) Black, you have hit the proverbial nail on the head with your statement: "My kids grew up in West Van and learned at a very young age the rules and courtesies of bicycling on our roadways."

I learned the rules of the road in elementary school, then, under the guidance of the RCMP, practised those rules in an empty parking lot across the street. I haven't forgotten them either and, as such, fall into the minority of cyclists who do ride within the law. The school districts, RCMP and Can-Bike (Cycling Canada) need to make cycling education mandatory, from kindergarten all the way up to Grade 12. In the Netherlands, for example, cycling education is mandatory. Of course, education would need to be backed up with proper enforcement by police to help drive home the lessons learned.

Over the years, this has been phased out and now we have a situation where we have a growing number of cyclists who fall into one of two categories:

1: Cyclists who legitimately do not know the rules of the road. These tend to be newer cyclists (kids/youth, lifestyle change, etc.) who would greatly benefit from a Can-Bike course, which covers all that, along with some rides on quiet residential streets so they can put what they've learned into actual practice.

2: The "elitists." They are a broad spectrum of cyclists. I will give two examples due to limitations on letter length.

Many already know the rules of the road and, for the most part, follow them. That said, they use various techniques to get from Point A to Point B. The "Idaho stop" is the most common trick observed. This is a rolling stop where a cyclist slows down as much as possible, without having to put a foot down, checks for cross traffic and then proceeds, irregardless of whether it's a stop sign or a red traffic light. Many who fall into this category are couriers and skilled cyclists.

At the other extreme is the cyclist whose attitude says: "I am not subject to the rules of the road." You'll find them pulling every stunt under the sun as they go from Point A to Point B. It's this group of cyclists who make all cyclists look bad.

**Kirsten Anderson
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