



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01802

Name of petitioner

Pat Johnson

Petition title

Improved safety for cyclists

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to:

- establish a standard mandatory brightness and width of flood for bicycle lights;
- carry out a publicity campaign to encourage responsible cycling; and
- increase availability of training facilities

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have contacted Colin Beattie MSP.

Petition background information

All bikes manufactured since 1985 must have a mandatory red reflector at the rear and orange reflectors on the pedals. In addition to this, The Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations (RVLR) 1989, updated in 2009, stipulates that all road bicycles should have a:

- white front light of at least 4 candelas fixed to the bike up to 1500mm from the ground; and
- a rear red light of at least 4 candelas fixed to the bike 350mm to 1500mm from the ground;

As far as the existing law is concerned, flashing lights are permitted as are dynamo lights. Flashing lights may appear to be effective as far as the cyclist being seen is concerned, but according to the website British Cycling, bright flashing lights can be confusing and blinding to motorists. They advocate that a wide flood of 110 degrees is more important for seeing and being seen than light intensity. The Highway Code recommends using a fixed, rather than flashing, beam when cycling in places without street lighting. Dynamo lights, though, do not require the bike to be connected to a

street lighting. Dynamo lights, though legal, require the bike to be moving at a reasonable speed to be effective, so they do not function when the cyclist is stationary at traffic lights or moving slowly in congested traffic.

The RVLA states that bicycle lights should be used between sunset and sunrise. There is no legal requirement for lights to be turned on at other times, such as in fog or bad weather conditions, both of which are particularly prevalent in Scotland. Some cyclists favour a rear red light fixed to a cycling helmet or rucksack but this does not comply with the legal requirements.

The wide variation of lights used on bicycles, even those that comply with the existing law, leads me to think that standardisation of cycle lights should be looked at. It would be unthinkable that a car or motorcycle would be sold without lights which adhere to the legal standard of brightness, angle and width of beam. I think manufacturers should be required to make all new bikes with fitted front and rear lights.

Transport Scotland reports that in 2018 there were 638 accidents involving pedal cycles, 156 of which were serious and 6 were fatal. They do not report the cause of these accidents or how many occurred in darkness, but the website Bike Radar reports that most accidents involving cyclists occur in low light conditions.

The number of cyclists on the roads has increased by 15% in the last ten years and is likely to continue to increase given the understandable concern for environmental issues. I'm sure cyclists want to be safe, but most of them have had no training or instruction on the rules of the road, have no knowledge of the Highway Code, have not been tested and do not have a licence. All these regulations apply to other road users but anyone can go into a bicycle shop and leave with a bike they can instantly and legally ride on public roads.

It is to be embraced and encouraged that more people are turning to cycling for transportation, particularly in towns, as a way of reducing carbon output and improving physical fitness. However, cyclists have to share the roads with motorised vehicles and I suspect that many of them, unless they are also motorists, don't have sufficient knowledge or perception of road safety, particularly when it comes to being seen in the dark.

I have been motivated to petition the Scottish Parliament about this matter as a result of observing the wide disparity of bicycle lighting, and sometimes a complete lack of lighting, in Edinburgh during the hours of darkness, of which we have more than most parts of the U.K.

As well as legislation to ensure all bicycles are manufactured fully equipped with proper illumination, a public campaign to encourage responsible cycling and increased availability of training facilities would, I'm sure, reduce accidents and increase safety. It would be wonderful if Scotland could lead the way in this.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01802>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

NO

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

Comments to stimulate online discussion