

TECHNICAL/LEGAL/HEALTH
YOUR QUESTIONS
OUR ANSWERS

Q&A



Shimano's PD-T780, which is clipless on one side only, is one of a small number of clipless pedals with reflectors

[TECHNICAL]

Reflecting on pedals

Q I have a very good light setup using LED torches (each one 200 lumens) on the front and good quality rear lights – though I have no idea if they conform to BS6102. My query, however, is about pedal reflectors. On your website it says: 'Pedal Reflectors – Four are required, coloured amber and marked BS6102/2 (or equivalent), positioned so that one is plainly visible to the front and another to the rear of each pedal.'

I use clip-in pedals. They have no reflectors. Does this mean in law, that if involved in an

accident, I would be deemed to be contributing to the accident?
STEVEN MABBOTT

A I reckon it could mean just that. Pedal reflectors have been shown (by the Transport & Road Research Laboratory) to be an especially effective aid in identifying that the vehicle in front is a pedal cycle. Bikes are slower than most other traffic, which will have to brake. And the time to collision if the driver does not react is short, so the earliest possible identification is essential. A lawyer who can argue like this for his client will likely have you found negligent.

The TRRL research pre-dates flashing red rear lights. These are also unique to pedal cycles: no other vehicle is allowed them. So I would argue that if the study were to be repeated it should find a red flasher beats pedal reflectors in providing an earlier identification of a pedal cycle – since lights are visible from greater distances.

However, it cannot help your case if you are found to be riding illegally, so the lack of approval marks on any of your lamps – excellent though they may be – is also of concern. Some bike parts retailers say something like 'all our lamps have a CE mark', but that's just basic consumer safety (so it shouldn't poison or electrocute you!) and is irrelevant to the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations.

It has become so difficult to find approved lights and clipless pedals with reflectors (apart from some clipless/platform pedals) that I think we need a major de-regulation of those regulations, to require simply that cycle lights be visible from a reasonable distance and allow alternatives to pedal reflectors, such as an extra rear light (flashing), or reflective ankle bands.

Here is how Under Secretary of State for Transport, Mike Penning, responds to that suggestion: 'There are no exemptions from the fitment of pedal reflectors. Some clip pedals (sic) provide the option to fit reflectors and cyclists may wish to encourage manufacturers to offer this option more often. It is possible that enforcement agencies would look kindly on someone who uses reflective ankle bands to try and comply in principle, however it would ultimately be for a court of law to give a definitive view on the acceptability of this.'

The bit about cyclists encouraging manufacturers really takes the biscuit. It has been illegal in the UK to sell a new bike without pedal reflectors since 1983. If 28 years' lost original equipment sales are not enough encouragement for foreign pedal manufacturers, what can UK cyclists do? Keep on writing to our MPs and meanwhile, if it makes us safer, practise civil disobedience!

CHRIS JUDEN

MEET THE EXPERTS



CHRIS JUDEN
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Send health and legal questions to the Editor (details on p78). We regret that Cycle magazine cannot answer unpublished health and legal queries. Technical and general enquiries, however, are a CTC membership service. Contact the CTC Information Office, tel: **0844 736 8450**, cycling@ctc.org.uk (general enquiries) or Chris Juden, technical@ctc.org.uk (technical enquiries). You can also write to: CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX. And don't forget that CTC operates a free-to-members advice line for personal injury claims, tel: 0844 736 8452.

**Letter
OF
THE
MONTH**

[LEGAL]

20's plenty – but for whom?

Q Ignoring the black tape that has been added to one of these signs in Alysham, Norfolk, they are still very confusing. They state 'no cars and no motorcycles', but that everyone else is restricted to 20 miles per hour. That could mean cyclists!

TED PRANGNELL, ASHFORD

A This is indeed confusing signage. The top sign prohibits motor vehicles travelling along the road, yet the bottom sign indicates that the maximum speed on that section of the road is 20 miles per hour.

Speed limits listed in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and also Rule 124 of the Highway Code relate to motor vehicles and not to bicycles. Rule 123 of the Highway Code includes a table that sets out the speed limits for various types of vehicle on various categories of road. The table does not include bicycles. It is, however, possible for local bylaws to impose speed limits on cyclists. For example, on Hampstead Heath there is an 8mph speed limit for cyclists, and in Richmond Park the speed limit of 20 miles per hour for vehicles also applies to cyclists.

It is open to the police to prosecute cyclists for 'careless and inconsiderate riding'. For example, in the Box Hill area of Surrey, the



National speed limits do not apply to cyclists, only motor vehicles. However, local bylaws can impose speed limits on cyclists

police have recently been posting leaflets warning cyclists against antisocial cycling. However, the main concern of the police is cyclists riding together in groups and slowing traffic flow. With the exception of local bylaws, I have not come across a cyclist being prosecuted for cycling too quickly on a road.

PAUL KITSON

[TECHNICAL]

Bike for forest trails

Q I currently use a Scott hybrid, which for 15 years has given excellent service on roads and canal paths etc. I would like to ride the numerous forest trails in my area, not really 'mountain biking', and am looking for a suitable bike. Because of my satisfaction with my current Scott I am drawn to another: the Aspect 30. Have you any knowledge or views on this particular model and are there any other makes or models you suggest I look at?

JOHN JONES, SWANSEA

A The Scott Aspect 30 looks perfectly adequate and excellent value for money – especially now that 2011 models are being sold off at a discount! But for trail riding, no stunts or tricks, I recommend

For general trail riding, a 29er like this Scott will roll more efficiently and flatten the bumps better than the 26in wheel equivalent



a 29er MTB, either a hardtail or rigid, since the bigger wheels roll more efficiently and honestly do flatten the bumps so well that you hardly need the extra weight of suspension – even in front.

And if you favour Scott: 2012 brings many more 29ers into their range. The Aspect 29 Tour, for example, is like a bigger-wheeled 30. But 2012 also brings much higher prices – due to weakening Western currencies and improving conditions for Far Eastern workers.

CHRIS JUDEN

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[HEALTH]

Diabetic cycling food

Q I suffer from type 2 diabetes. Having taken up cycling on retiring in March, I am now riding about 150 miles over three sessions a week. Could you give some general advice about how to increase my food intake to avoid losing weight? I am not a typical diabetic. I am 64, very fit and already slim (70kg and 175cm), with a balanced diet for my condition. Secondly, are there any energy bars/gels on the market that are compatible with my condition to give a boost during longer rides?

JOHN FINDLAY, GUILDFORD

A Diabetes occurs when the level of blood glucose in the body becomes higher than normal. This is due either to a lack of the hormone insulin, which regulates glucose levels, or because the body's cells do not use the insulin effectively. Type 2 diabetes tends to occur later in adulthood and in many cases can be managed by diet and healthy lifestyle, although sometimes medication and occasionally insulin is required.

A good diet for diabetes is essentially the same as any other balanced diet. No special foods are needed and you should eat a diet low in fat, salt and sugar and high in fibre, fruit and vegetables. Your BMI (body mass index) calculated from your weight and height (kg/m²) is in the normal range (18.5-25). Aim to maintain it simply by increasing your food intake to match your additional energy expenditure. Longer-acting carbohydrates such as pasta, bread, rice and cereals are advisable before a long ride.

Assuming you are not on

Muesli bars and bananas are a better diabetic refuelling option than energy bars

medication or insulin for your diabetes (this is important as precautions for exercise in these diabetics differ due to their increased risk of hypoglycaemia), there are few things you need to do differently from a non-diabetic.

On a long ride you might use fruit juice. If you do use a sports drink, the charity Diabetes UK advises isotonic versions. Energy bars and gels are often high in soluble sugars and hence give you a surge in glucose. A healthy snack such as a muesli bar or banana may be better. There is no need to buy expensive 'diabetic' or 'sports' foods.

There is a vast amount of useful information on websites such as www.runsweet.com (which has detailed advice for diabetics who participate in sport), and www.diabetes.org.uk (Diabetes UK, which has lots of general advice for diabetics).

DR MATT BROOKS

[TECHNICAL]

Replacement gear hangers

Q Regarding the display board showing many different gear hangers on page 50 of the February-March 2011 issue of *Cycle*: can you advise me on suppliers of these components?

T DIXON, WHITBY

A The display board shows part of the Wheels Manufacturing range of more than 150 different replacement gear hangers. They are distributed by Madison, who also handle Shimano. So any reasonably large cycle dealer should be able to supply whichever you need to fit your brand and model of bike.

CHRIS JUDEN

Just some of the gear hangers available from Wheels Manufacturing. They're available in the UK via Madison



Shimano flat bar road shifters will work fine with Shimano MTB mechs – in 9-speed

[TECHNICAL]

Flat-bar road shifters

Q I have a pair of 9-speed Shimano shifters off a flat-bar road bike, which was triple-chaining equipped. They are marked SL-R440. I wish to use them on an MTB with a Shimano 9-speed XTR rear mech and XT top-swing triple front mech. Are these shifters compatible?

DAVE TUCKER, NEW MILTON

A Shimano's 'flat-bar-road' shifters are mountain shifters in roadie clothing. The rear mech is obviously compatible, and as Shimano's MTB shifters operate both top-swing and link-type MTB mechs, your SL-R440 should also work just fine.

CHRIS JUDEN

[TECHNICAL / LEGAL]

Old bikes & pedal reflectors

Q Are pedal reflectors compulsory for my veteran bicycle, which is over 45 years old and has never had them.

C H BEVIS, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT

A In 1983 it was made illegal to sell a new bike without reflectors on its pedals, and in 1989 these became compulsory also for the cyclist, when cycling in the dark.

But road traffic regulations always make allowances for older vehicles, so there's an exemption for bikes that were in use before October 1985. Which is fair, as by then it had been illegal to sell a bike without them for a couple of years.

However, we are now in 2011. Virtually all cyclists will be riding bikes that are much less than 26 years old. On these bikes, pedal reflectors are compulsory. The exemption for bikes like yours is little discussed, but it is there.

CHRIS JUDEN