

CYCLOPEDIA

Questions answered, subjects explained – Cyclopedia is your bimonthly cycling reference guide



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&
A

Legal Hidden reflector

Q My wife recently bought a Ribble Urban AL e (pictured). It has white and red lights that run off the main battery, as well as the required pedal reflectors. However, the red rear reflector on the seatpost is obscured when a saddlebag is attached to the rear rack. So far we've been unable to find a red reflector to fit the rear mudguard. Does the fact that the rear red reflector is covered by the saddlebag cause a breach of the law, in any or all circumstances?
David Durose

A Parking my obsession with cyclists' conspicuity for a moment, the law's requirement for a red rear reflector only applies during the hours of darkness (lighting up times). If you know that the bike will only be used in daylight as so defined, then you are not contravening the construction and use or road vehicle lighting regulations.

Otherwise, were you to venture out at night or in conditions of reduced visibility, a sense of self-preservation dictates the use of front and rear lights along with retro-reflective material, all of which is likely to be more effective than the solitary red reflector required by law. But still try to fit one, because if the very worst happened you can bet your boots, irrespective of every

Your Experts



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other bit of kit, that the drivers' insurers would still make an issue of it. Insurers are like that.

The criteria for the selection of clothing ought to include creation of a contrast with the backdrop. Given our narrow front and rear profiles, brightness and contrast are paramount. Visual acuity is at its most efficient looking straight ahead; peripheral acuity is less, so in reality it's down to us to announce our presence!

Paul Darlington

Technical

Tyre 'directionalness'

Q Okay, I know 'directionalness' isn't a word. I've got Schwalbe Marathons, the ordinary ones (Greenguard?). I've just noticed that my front one is mounted the wrong way round, according to the arrow. This bike has disc brakes, so I can't just turn the wheel around. It's been like that for about 1,500 miles. Does it matter?
LancsGirl, via the Cycling UK Forum

A The rotational direction arrow found on some, but by no means all, cycle tyres is essentially advisory. There's negligible risk of premature failure from using a cycle tyre with such an arrow installed the 'wrong' way round. Typically, the tyre's rubber tread cap is applied as a strip wrapped around the carcass prior to vulcanisation in a mould. The ends of the strip are angled at the overlap to ensure its continuous thickness.

Motor vehicle tyres must be used in the correct rotational direction to prevent the overlapping edge from being

