

# New Jersey's Safe Passing Law Aims to Protect Cyclists and Pedestrians on the Road

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The COVID-19 pandemic may have halted or reduced travel for many in New Jersey, but the end of the year also came with a surprising and sobering statistic: the number of fatal accidents involving cars in New Jersey rose in 2020 despite the pandemic.

Last year, 587 fatal accidents [were reported across the state](#), up from 558 in 2019. Fatal accidents involving [pedestrians](#) have also risen, and so have fatal accidents involving cyclists. [Eighteen cyclists](#) lost their lives on New Jersey roads last year, up from only [twelve](#) the year before.

In response to these alarming numbers—and the long-term work of certain local bike safety advocacy groups—the New Jersey state legislature [recently passed a bipartisan bill](#) to increase the safety of New Jersey's bikers and pedestrians. This bill, now known as the New Jersey Safe Passing Law, was signed into law by New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy on Thursday, August 5th.

## The New Jersey Safe Passing Law

Under the [New Jersey Safe Passing Law](#), drivers who are passing cyclists or pedestrians must move over one lane if it's safe to do so. If moving over one lane isn't possible or safe, drivers must allow four feet of space between their vehicle and the pedestrian or cyclist until they've safely passed them. In the event that it isn't possible to safely allow four feet of space, the driver is required to slow their vehicle to 25 miles per hour.

In addition to cyclists and pedestrians, the bill also covers New Jersey residents with mobility issues who are riding electric scooters or in wheelchairs. Drivers who fail to follow the new law may face fines of \$100, while drivers who cause bodily injury by failing to comply may face a fine of up to \$500 and have two motor vehicle points added to their driving record.

## Struck by a car while cycling? Here are a few next steps

While the Safe Passing Law is certainly a significant step toward making the road a safer place for cyclists, negligent drivers can still present a danger on the road.

If you've been injured by a vehicle on the road while biking, you may be wondering what recourse

you have for paying medical bills and recovering damages.

Once you've carefully documented the accident, spoken to any police dispatched to the scene, and gotten any needed medical attention, the following steps can help ensure you receive the proper compensation and help:

1. Contact an attorney. Having an experienced attorney on your side can be crucial if you need to pursue damages from the party at fault or need help making an insurance claim.
2. Since New Jersey is a "no fault" insurance state, medical bills should be covered through your own health insurance or through the Personal Injury Protection benefits included in your auto insurance (P.I.P. benefits [may be applicable](#) even if you're injured while riding a bike).
3. Depending on the specifics of your auto insurance policy, you may also be entitled to pursue additional damages for pain and suffering or non-economic loss. A skilled attorney can guide you through your options for pursuing damages and help to ensure that you receive what you're entitled to.

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