

Cyclists on mobile phones in Japan could face jail

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Photo: BreakingNewsEnglish.com

A revision to a traffic law aimed at amending the behaviour of cyclists came into effect in Japan on Friday. The revised Road Traffic Act makes it illegal to use mobile phones or to be under the influence of alcohol while cycling. Those distracted by phones could be

punished with a maximum six-month prison sentence or a fine of 100,000 yen (\$654). The penalties are harsher for those under the influence. Intoxicated cyclists with more than 0.15 milligrams of alcohol per litre of breath could get up to three years in jail or be fined 500,000 yen (\$3,270). Furthermore, restaurants that serve alcohol to customers in the knowledge that they will ride a bicycle afterwards may also be punished.

Japan's National Police Agency reported a sharp rise in the number of traffic accidents caused by cyclists using phones. There was a 50 per cent increase in the five-year period to 2023. The BBC reports that over 72,000 bicycle accidents were recorded in Japan last year. This accounted for over 20 per cent of all traffic accidents. Most collisions were caused by people under 20 years of age. Many of these cyclists were watching videos or playing games. One reason for the rise in cycling-related accidents is a greater number of people using bicycles instead of public transport because of the coronavirus pandemic. Authorities say raising public awareness of the revised traffic rules could be a challenge.

Sources: [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) / [mainichi.jp](https://www.mainichi.jp) / [yomiuri.com](https://www.yomiuri.com)

Writing

People should be encouraged to cycle instead of drive. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

traffic law / cyclists / mobile phones / under the influence / prison / alcohol / be fined / traffic accidents / people under 20 / videos / playing games / public transport / rules

True / False

- 1) New traffic laws for cyclists in Japan have started. T / F
- 2) Cyclists who ride and look at a mobile phone could go to jail for a year. T / F
- 3) Cyclists who have drunk alcohol could be imprisoned for three years. T / F
- 4) Restaurants that serve cyclists alcohol could be punished. T / F
- 5) Accidents caused by phone-watching cyclists doubled in five years. T / F
- 6) Cyclists are responsible for a fifth of all Japan's traffic accidents. T / F
- 7) Most cyclists in Japan who have traffic accidents are over 60. T / F
- 8) Authorities have had great success in raising public awareness. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. revision | a. made up |
| 2. came into effect | b. penalized |
| 3. influence | c. crashes |
| 4. intoxicated | d. started |
| 5. punished | e. officials |
| 6. sharp | f. drunk |
| 7. accounted for | g. difficult task |
| 8. collisions | h. change |
| 9. authorities | i. steep |
| 10. challenge | j. effect |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of cycling?
- b) What laws should there be for cyclists?
- c) What do you think of using phones while cycling?
- d) What do you think of going to prison for using phones while cycling?
- e) What are the dangers of using phones while cycling?
- f) Is being under the influence while cycling the same as drunk driving?
- g) How important are bicycles to you?
- h) Should restaurants be fined for serving alcohol to cyclists?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. aimed at amending the | a. awareness |
| 2. The revised Road Traffic Act | b. alcohol to customers |
| 3. be under the influence | c. related accidents |
| 4. intoxicated | d. rise in the number |
| 5. restaurants that serve | e. makes it illegal |
| 6. a sharp | f. public transport |
| 7. This accounted | g. cyclists |
| 8. the rise in cycling- | h. behaviour of cyclists |
| 9. using bicycles instead of | i. for over 20 per cent |
| 10. raising public | j. of alcohol |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How safe are roads for cyclists in your country?
- Should there be more cycle lanes on your country's roads?
- How can roads be made safer for cyclists?
- What are the benefits of cycling?
- Should we all be encourage to use bicycles instead of cars?
- How can countries raise awareness of road safety for cyclists?
- What questions would you like to ask road safety experts?

Spelling

- aimed at mdinaneg the behaviour
- under the nlneucife of alcohol
- sdetttdcira by phones
- iecodxtitna cyclists
- 0.15 ialglmism of alcohol
- airfftc accidents
- This duaocntce for over 20 per cent
- Most snisoilcol were caused by people
- public rstroanpt
- the coronavirus ainpcedm
- tahurioiets say raising public awareness
- aimed at mdinaneg the behaviour

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. j	4. f	5. b
6. i	7. a	8. c	9. e	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Cardiovascular Health

You think cardiovascular health is the best reason to cycle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their reasons. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): helping the environment, weight control or stress reduction.

Role B – Helps the Environment

You think helping the environment is the best reason to cycle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their reasons. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): cardiovascular health, weight control or stress reduction.

Role C – Weight Control

You think weight control is the best reason to cycle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their reasons. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): helping the environment, cardiovascular health or stress reduction.

Role D – Stress Reduction

You think stress reduction is the best reason to cycle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their reasons. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): helping the environment, weight control or cardiovascular health.

Speaking – Cycling Benefits

Rank these with your partner. Put the most beneficial at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| • Cardiovascular health | • Cheap |
| • Help the environment | • Make friends |
| • See the countryside | • Weight control |
| • Reduces stress | • Fun |

Answers – True False

1	T	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	T	7	F	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.