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## Cyclists on mobile phones in Japan could face jail – 4th November 2024

### Level 4

New traffic laws in Japan make it illegal for cyclists to use mobile phones or be under the influence of alcohol when they are on their bikes. Cyclists using phones could get a six-month prison sentence or a fine of \$650. The penalties are heavier for those who drink alcohol and ride. They could get three years in jail or be fined \$3,270. Moreover, restaurants that serve alcohol to cyclists could also be punished.

Japan's police reported a big rise in traffic accidents caused by phone-using cyclists. There was a 50 per cent increase in the five years to 2023. There were 72,000 bicycle accidents in Japan last year. This was 20 per cent of all traffic accidents. Most were caused by people under 20 years old. People are using bicycles instead of public transport because of coronavirus. Authorities say raising public awareness of the new rules could be a challenge.

### Level 5

Changes to traffic laws aimed at cyclists came into effect in Japan on Friday. New laws make it illegal to use mobile phones or be under the influence of alcohol while cycling. Cyclists using phones could get a six-month prison sentence or a fine of 100,000 yen (\$654). The penalties are harsher for those who drink alcohol and ride. Cyclists with more than 0.15 milligrams of alcohol per litre of breath could get three years in jail or be fined 500,000 yen (\$3,270). Moreover, restaurants that serve alcohol to cyclists may also be punished.

Japan's police agency reported a big rise in traffic accidents caused by cyclists using phones. There was a 50 per cent increase in the five years to 2023. The BBC reports that there were 72,000 bicycle accidents in Japan last year. This was 20 per cent of all traffic accidents. Most were caused by people under 20 years old. One reason for the rise in cycling-related accidents more people are using bicycles instead of public transport because of the coronavirus pandemic. Authorities say raising public awareness of the new traffic rules could be a challenge.

### Level 6

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.