

# S.812 - A Commonsense Update to SC Traffic Law



## What the Bill Does

S.812 updates South Carolina traffic law to better reflect how people on bicycles **already** safely move through intersections. **This policy is commonly known as an "Idaho Stop" or "Safety Stop."**

### At Red Lights

Requires a person riding a bicycle to **come to a full stop at a red light**, but allows them to proceed when the intersection is clear and it is safe to do so.

### At Stop Signs

Allows a person riding a bicycle to **treat stop signs as yield signs**, slowing down and yielding to any traffic before continuing when safe to do so.

**People riding bicycles must still yield the right of way. No one is allowed to ignore traffic signals or blow through intersections.**

South Carolinians riding bicycles will do what they currently do: **slow down at stop signs, stop when necessary, and ride cautiously through the intersection if the way is clear.** The only difference will be that this common, safe way to ride will be legal.

# 14.5%

**Decline in bicycle injuries**

After **Idaho originally** adopted this policy in **1982**.

# 23%

**Reduction in crashes & injuries**

At stop sign intersections when **Delaware** adopted a similar law in **2017**.

States that have adopted similar safety stop laws since 2017: **Arkansas, Utah, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington.**

Currently being considered in: **Arizona, Montana, Texas, and Georgia, & California.**

# Why It Improves Safety

## 1 Federal Research Supports The Bicycle Safety Stop

The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has looked at these laws and recently documented proven safety benefits. NHTSA released a fact sheet in 2023 and a more detailed analysis in 2025 confirming these laws work to keep people safe.

## 2 Intersections Are Most Dangerous

Most crashes involving bicycles occur at intersections. Allowing people on bikes to move through clear intersections when safe to do so reduces the time they spend in the most dangerous part of the roadway.

## 3 Sensor Detection Problem

Many traffic signals across South Carolina rely on underground sensors that do not detect bicycles. Current law already allows a vehicle to proceed through a signal that fails to change after 120 seconds. S.812 provides a clearer and safer approach for bicycles rather than waiting two minutes at a signal that may never detect them.

## 4 Momentum & Predictability

Bicycles operate differently than motor vehicles and rely on **momentum**. Keeping a slow, safe momentum through a clear intersection is known to reduce exposure to traffic and makes movements more predictable, helping drivers better anticipate how bicycles will move.

S.812 is a **zero cost update to state law** that simply reflects how people are already riding bicycles across our great state of South Carolina & simply makes it legal.



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