



Driving on the Right Side of the Road Inline Skating Safety



JUST THE FACTS

- Often called “rollerblading” after a popular brand of inline skates, it is estimated that more than 17 million Americans participate in the sport of inline skating.¹
- According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 61,000 people were treated for inline-skating-related injuries in hospital emergency rooms, doctors’ offices, clinics, and other medical settings in 2007.²
- From 2003-2007, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated an average of 32,585 inline skating injuries occurred annually.³
- Most of the many thousands of inline skating injuries that happen each year are attributable to skaters who aren’t wearing safety gear.⁴
- Sidewalks and roads are the sites of roughly half of all inline skating injuries.⁵
- Head injuries can plague skaters who don’t wear helmets.⁶

IT’S THE LAW

- Texas laws do not specifically speak to inline skating, however, there are existing laws that apply to pedestrians and bicyclists that may apply. A number of cities have specific ordinances that govern inline skating. Check your city’s website or <http://www.municode.com> for ordinances that apply to your town or city.
- Here are several examples of the types of local laws that have been adopted by cities across the state:
 - Many cities have made it against the law to skate on any public street except when crossing a street in a crosswalk. For instance, the City of San Marcos has the following ordinance:
 - It is unlawful for a person upon roller skates, inline skates, a skateboard or riding in or by means of any coaster, toy vehicle or similar device, to go upon any public street, except while crossing a street in a crosswalk.⁷
 - Several other cities have nearly identical ordinances.⁸ However, cities may decide that an ordinance like this should not apply to roller skates, as Houston did in this ordinance:
 - No person riding in or by means of any coaster, toy vehicle, or similar vehicle, shall go upon any roadway, except while crossing such roadway in accordance with the pedestrian crossing regulations. *The provisions of this section shall not apply to persons on roller skates.*⁹
 - It is not uncommon for a city to ban in-line skating in a certain area of the city.
For example:
 - San Marcos has made it unlawful to ride inline skates within the central business area zoning district.¹⁰
 - Denton has made it unlawful to skate within 500 feet of certain intersections as long as signs are posted.¹¹
 - A Fort Worth ordinance bans inline skating in designated parks and recreational areas where signs are posted indicating that skating is prohibited.¹²
 - Galveston does not allow people to roller skate in the entertainment areas of the city unless the person has obtained approval from the city park board of trustees to do so.¹³ Galveston also does not allow inline skating in a specific area “between and including 19th and 25th Streets and between and including Water and Church Streets.” Violating the ordinance is punishable by a fine of up to \$500.¹⁴

- San Antonio prohibits skating on walking and running tracks and trails in two city parks listed in an ordinance.¹⁵
- Cities are also likely to ban “skitching” or “clinging” to a vehicle on a roadway. An example is this San Antonio ordinance:
 - Any person riding upon any bicycle, motorcycle, coaster, roller skates, sled, or any toy vehicle shall not attach the same or himself to a moving vehicle upon any roadway.¹⁶

KEEP IT SAFE

- Learn the basic skills of the sport particularly how to stop properly before venturing into traffic.
- Wear protective gear, including a helmet, wrist protectors, and knee and elbow pads.
- Always put on protective gear before putting on your skates.
- Perform warm-up exercises before and after skating.
- Obey traffic signals, stay on the right side of the road, and don't weave in and out of lanes.
- Be conscious of others: skaters, pedestrians, joggers, and bicyclists frequently use the same areas. To avoid collisions, use caution when skating around others.
- Look left-right-left before entering a roadway.
- Skate on the right side of sidewalks, bike paths, and trails. Pass on the left as cars do, and after yelling "passing on the left." Don't pass without warning. Also pass only when it is safe, and when you have enough room for both you and the person(s) you want to pass to be at the full extension position of your stroke.
- Skate on smooth, paved surfaces without any traffic.
- Wherever you skate, be sure there are no potholes, cracks, or other obstacles. Make certain the area is dry and free of wet leaves, oily patches, or ice.
- Try to use recreational trails.
- If you must use sidewalks or roads, never skate in traffic. Be courteous to pedestrians, bicyclists, and anyone else you might encounter. Always use crosswalks to get across streets.
- Never skate at night, and also try to avoid skating at dusk, which is when hazards are more difficult to see and you're less visible to others.
- Never skate when it's raining or snowing, as this will make surfaces slippery and increase your chances of getting hurt.
- Watch for changes in skating trail conditions because of traffic, weather conditions, or hazards such as water, potholes, or storm debris.
- Never get towed behind a car, bike, or other vehicle.
- Avoid skating in crowded walkways.
- Avoid skating on streets, driveways, or surfaces with water, sand, gravel, or dirt.
- Do not skate at night -- others can't see you and you can't see obstacles or other skaters.
- Don't “skitch” (hold onto a moving vehicle).
- Don't “snake” (cut in on someone else's line).
- When in doubt, slow down.

Adapted from *Inline Skating Injury Prevention*,¹⁷ *Skate But Skate Safely – Always Wear Safety Gear*,¹⁸ *Safety Tips: Inline Skating*,¹⁹ and *Inline Skating Safety*.²⁰

¹ American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, *Inline Skating Injury Prevention* (last reviewed September 2009), Retrieved on September 30, 2011, from <http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00138> (hereinafter referred as *Inline Skating Injury Prevention*)

² See *Inline Skating Injury Prevention* - endnote 1

³ National Safety Council, *Inline Skating Safety*, Retrieved on September 30, 2011, from http://www.nsc.org/news_resources/resources/documents/inline_skating_safety.pdf (hereinafter referred as *Inline Skating Safety*)

⁴ KidsHealth, *Safety Tips: Inline Skating* (last reviewed May 2010), Retrieved on September 30, 2011, from http://kidshealth.org/teen/safety/sports_safety/safety_inline.html (hereinafter referred to as *Safety Tips: Inline Skating*)

⁵ See *Safety Tips: Inline Skating* - endnote 4

⁶ See *Safety Tips: Inline Skating* - endnote 4

⁷ San Marcos Code Ordin. (Tex.) § 82.004 (1998).

⁸ See Denton Code Ordin. (Tex.) § 18-11; Fort Worth Code Ordin. (Tex.) § 22-16; Galveston Code Ordin. (Tex.) § 34-2; San Antonio Code Ordin. (Tex.) § 38-21; Waco Code Ordin. (Tex.) § 25-9.

⁹ Houston Code Ordin. (Tex.) §45-16 (1990).

¹⁰ San Marcos Code Ordin. (Tex.) § 82.269 (1998).

¹¹ Denton Code Ordin. (Tex.) §18-13.

¹² Fort Worth Code Ordin. (Tex.) §24-18.

¹³ Galveston Code Ordin. (Tex.) §20.5-18.

¹⁴ Galveston Code Ordin. (Tex.) §24-18 (1999).

¹⁵ San Antonio Code Ordin. (Tex.) § 22-26 (1998).

¹⁶ San Antonio Code Ordin. (Tex.) § 19-285; see also Fort Worth Code Ordin. §22-14.

¹⁷ See *Inline Skating Injury Prevention* - endnote 1

¹⁸ Consumer Product Safety Commission, *Skate But Skate Safely – Always Wear Safety Gear*, CPSC Document #5014, Retrieved on September 30, 2011, from <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/5014.pdf>

¹⁹ See *Safety Tips: Inline Skating* - endnote 4

²⁰ See *Inline Skating Safety* - endnote 3