

Affect of Rumble Strips on Bicyclists in Tennessee

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It is our opinion that Shoulder Rumble Strips (SRS), and any other similar roadway treatments, pose a unique safety hazard to cyclists in the state of Tennessee when they are installed in a manner that renders the shoulder of the roadway unusable by cyclists. The resulting effect is that the cyclists must operate in the traffic lanes, thereby significantly increasing their risk of being involved in an accident with a motorized vehicle. While the laws in the State of Tennessee permit cyclists to legally operate in the traffic lanes, the majority of cyclists prefer to operate in the shoulder, where one is available.

In Summary:

- Rumbles create an extremely rough surface, making rumbled pavement nearly impossible for bicycle riding.
- Rumbled shoulders which leave less than 4' of rideable space force the cyclist onto the road, which although legal for a cyclist, can create a dangerous situation. Especially on a rural road with narrow travel lanes and higher speeds, a vehicle passing a cyclist (providing the mandatory 3 feet of passing space) may cross the center-line and create potential for a head-on collision with oncoming traffic.
- Shoulders with less than 4' of rideable space should not receive rumble treatment. Even an 18" shoulder is usually rideable when a rumble strip is not present.
- Crossing a rumble can be dangerous for a cyclist and may lead to the cyclist falling into the travel lane if no periodic break in the rumble is provided.
- Roadway safety is very important for all users. Rumble strip installation on roads with narrow shoulders may eliminate safe use by bicyclists.

Suggested actions:

- Follow guidelines in Federal Highway Administration Technical Advisory: ROADWAY SHOULDER RUMBLE STRIPS (T 5040.35.) This document outlines rumble strip minimum shoulder widths, breaks in strips and stripes, usage in conjunction with driver behaviour safety programs for the general public, etc.
- Confer with representatives of the cycling community when there is a question regarding a specific road.

We appreciate the opportunity to voice our opinion and the difficulty of deciding what is best for all your constituents.

Respectfully,

Bicycle riders in Sumner, Wilson, Williamson, Davidson and Rutherford Counties