

## **Lights: Keeping it Legal**

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Every cyclist has seen the vast array of lighting available, be they a leisure cyclist, sports cyclist or Emergency Services Cyclist. These lights range from the battery powered commuter light to the 'turn night into day', rechargeable, downhill-racer-loony-nuclear-explosions-in-a-box lights. With all that is available, it is no surprise that people often stray outside of the law with their choice of illumination.

The law relating to cycle lights in the UK are set down in the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 and the Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations 2005.

The amended regulations make a number of significant changes in the law as they affect cyclists. The first change of note for the Emergency Services is that the requirement for an emergency vehicle to be a 'Motor Vehicle' has been replaced with 'Vehicle'. This effectively allows pedal cycles to be classified as emergency vehicles and therefore to be lawfully equipped with flashing blue lights.

The next and probably most significant change has been the legalising of flashing position lights for cycles. The Regulations specify lights of at least four candela output and *quote*: - "the light shown by the lamp when flashing shall be displayed not less than 60 nor more than 240 equal times per minute and the intervals between each display of light shall be constant."

In plain language, the light can flash between once and four times a second at a steady rate.

The obligatory lights that cycles need to conform to British Standard are as follows: a) old style lights BS6873 or b) new flashing style BS6102. What that means to us in Emergency Services is that, to continue to set the right example, any high-power light you fit to your cycle needs to be backed up by lights that meet the above minimum requirements. In my case, I have a small British Standard compliant front position lamp that has the flashing capability, and, to light the way when away from street lighting, a Lupine Passubio halogen 'blinder'. "My handlebars aren't wide enough for all that," I hear you cry. I overcame this limitation by fitting a 'Space Grip' to my bars. This T-shaped attachment, available in several different sizes, clamps to the handlebar and provides additional mounting space for lights, computers, etc.

Remember, folks: It's down to us to show the way to do it right.

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