

Direction signing and cycle maps

Planning for cyclists is not merely a matter of paths and roads. Direction signing and information are also important parameters. It is especially important that construction, direction signing and information are planned and implemented in a closely co-ordinated process.



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Direction signing

Direction signing is what links cycle paths, cycle tracks, minor local roads, forest roads etc, together to form cycle routes. It was a huge improvement for cyclists when the new Road Standards and Guidelines for direction signing were introduced in Denmark in 1991. As a result the sporadically occurring local signs were replaced by a coherent signing system of cycle routes.

In 1999 the Road Standards and Guidelines appeared in a revised version, which incorporates the practical experience gained in connection with direction signing during the 1990s, including national cycle routes opened in 1993¹¹⁸. The new standards concern route signing, signing to and from routes and signing outside routes. There is also a section on information boards and cycle maps with a view to ensuring that the same colours and symbols are used in direction signing and maps.



PHOTO: Jens Erik Larsen

Direction signing for cyclists should be sufficiently clear without being an eyesore, and it should be of the same standard as signing for motorists, but at the same time clearly distinguishable so that there can be no doubt as to who the signs are for.

Signing of cycle routes

This direction signing has made possible the development of local, regional and national cycle routes. Today there are thousands of kilo-

metres of signed cycle routes. The Road Standards and Guidelines concerning direction signing from 1999 divide cycle routes into three categories with the numbers:

- National routes 1-15
- Regional routes 16-99
- Local routes 100-999

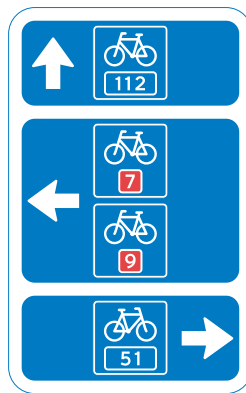
It is also permitted to use supplementary names. For local routes a name is sufficient, and logos may also be used, eg a pig for The Pig Track etc. The latter is due to the tourist industry's wish for a more vivid marking of local routes. However, the guidelines ensure uniformity of colour with a white logo on a blue background.

Route signing is also used in urban areas, where both national and regional routes pass through town centres, while local routes may be given names like "The Commuter Route", "The Centre Route" and, for instance, connect residential areas with city centres.

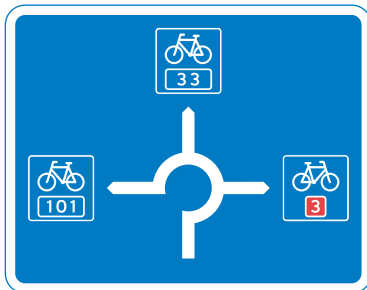
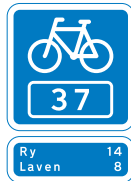
The most used direction signs are route signs, which are usually square, measuring 40x40, 30x30, 20x20 or even as little as 10x10 cm in woods and the like. This kind of sign is mainly used to confirm the route, but can also be found at minor crossroads, where the sign may be placed a short way down the route one is supposed to take.



Route signs for national, regional and local routes.



Arrow direction signs, stack-type direction signs and map-type direction signs.



The sign can also be supplemented with an arrow on a separate board below, and geographical destinations can also be shown on such boards.

The identification of the route consists of a bicycle symbol and the route number/name/logo. No arrows or other symbols may be placed within this identification frame. The identification of the route reappears on all types of sign, including arrow direction signs, stack-type direction signs and map-type direction signs.

Arrow direction signs are used at major junctions and when it is necessary to indicate a number of geographical destinations in connection with a change of direction in the

The sign changes in course of time.

route. Stack-type direction signs are used immediately before a junction when, for example, information about more than one route is required. Map-type direction signs can be used at very complex junctions and at roundabouts.

In a number of Danish town centres, cycle routes are marked by special concrete elements or paving slabs. It can be difficult to find one's way in the crooked streets and also to see signs, so that it may be an advantage to use marking on the road surface or cycle track.



PHOTO: Jens Erik Larsen

Size and placing of signs

It is very important that cyclists should realise that they need to look out for blue signs and that these signs are information for cyclists. It helps, however, if the signs are always placed on the same side of the road and at the same height. This makes it possible to keep the signs as small as possible while ensuring that they are seen by cyclists.

Most cyclists ride in a slightly bent forward position and with their eyes on the road surface in front of them, which means that signs must be low. However, not too low because of the risk of their being covered by grass etc, in summer and snow in winter. The most suitable placing is therefore about one meter above pavement level and on the right side of the road.

The size of the signs must be determined by vehicle speeds and the amount of information they contain. Reading distances and size of letters have been tested in practice. Further details concerning the choice and design of signs is to be found in Road standards and guidelines for direction signing on cycle and walking routes (in Danish) from the Road Directorate.

User studies

No detailed studies have been carried out of cyclists' understanding of and views on the direction signing of cycle routes. However, the Danish Tourist Board has carried out an interview survey of cycle tourists in Denmark and, among other things, asked about tourists' satisfaction with the national cycle routes and their signing. Germans gave the signing an average of 4.6 points out of a maximum of 5, while with 4.2 points Danes were slightly less enthusiastic but nevertheless quite well satisfied²³.



PHOTO: Jens Erik Larsen

Signing in Switzerland.

Signing in other countries

Taken as a whole, the signing of Danish cycle routes is coherent and consistent and of the same standard as signing for other road users, if it lives up to the requirement of the Road Standards. This is not the case in a number of other countries, where there is often relatively little signing, sometimes in the form of adhesive labels and the like. In recent years, however, some countries have introduced good signing systems.

This is the case, for example, in Switzerland, which has acquired a good signing system in connection with the establishment of a national system of cycle routes. One new idea here is that there is also room for logos on the national route signs, for instance, for international routes. An example of this is The Three Countries Route, which passes through Switzerland, France and Germany and has a green triangle as its logo. In addition, the signs indicate, where relevant, how much the route rises within the next kilometres, eg 630 m in the next 7.5 km. One sign indicates where one must wheel one's bicycle – not with respect to the steep mountain

climbs, but for short stretches in towns where the route passes through very narrow streets or pedestrian areas.

Service signing

Like other road users, cyclists also need directions for services. The Danish Road Standards and Guidelines describe how directions to tourist attractions, camping sites, beaches, stations, ferries etc, should be given in the form of signs.

In principle, all the normal service symbols can be used. A new symbol shows the routes to camping sites for cyclists etc. This symbol has, for example, already been used in a number of places along the national cycle routes.

For normal ordinary direction signing inverse colours are used, ie a blue text on a white background. Arrow direction signs have a white text on a blue background in order to keep the colour scheme simple. Service symbols are, however, black.

Special service direction signing is only used when cyclists have to use



Service signing.



Service signing to bicycle parking.

other routes than motorists. To date service direction signing has not been introduced to any great extent, but as a result of the increasing interest in cycle tourists Funen County is, for example, now planning to sign to local sights along cycle routes at places where there are at present no such signs.

Direction signing to bicycle parking

Especially in densely built-up areas, near stations etc, it is relevant to sign clearly to bicycle parking. Unfortunately it is more common to see signs saying No bicycle parking than directions to parking. There are, however, examples of service signing to bicycle parking.

Most frequently the sign consists of the bicycle symbol on a blue background with a P in one corner and possibly also an arrow. The Danish Standard bicycle symbol, black on white, is used by DSB. In other places one can see a broad range of signs. As yet, the Road Standards and Guidelines do not contain a specific proposal for this sign, except that “bicycle parking” can be written on a service arrow direction sign.

Cycle maps

Cycle maps can be used both for planning one’s route and to find one’s way, and for tourists the map can be a nice memento of the tour afterwards. Finally, cycle maps can contain practical information concerning services on the route like accommodation, eating places, shops, bicycle repairs etc.

The counties in Denmark have published good cycle maps – most of them with a scale of 1:100,000, which are excellent for cycling in rural areas. The signatures and formats of the maps have been harmonised on the basis of the Association of County Councils manual, which has been by and large followed by the individual counties⁵.

Local cycle maps have been published with a scale of 1:50,000 in certain tourist areas. In addition to the signed national and regional routes these maps show local routes and suggestions for tours. Good examples can be found in North Funen and on Langeland. The local population can also make good use of these maps for leisure activities.

Cycle maps of urban areas

Here there is a need for maps on a more detailed scale and of a handier format and scope. These maps usually contain a 1:100,000 key map, a 1:25,000 town map and a 1:10,000 town centre map. These are suitable scales because the cyclist needs to be able to compare with regional maps, and all major roads and preferably also all the streets in the centre should be named.

Furthermore, the most important destinations for both locals and tourists are included. The signature key should preferably be in Danish, English and German even though the maps are primarily intended for local use.



Cycle maps is easy accessible.

Cycle maps for urban areas are important for both established residents and people who have just moved to the town and are not acquainted with the system of cycle tracks and paths. The maps should both help people to find the way and also motivate them to cycle, thereby enhancing their quality of life. The maps can present ideas for trying out different routes, can be used for the Sunday cycle trip out of the town and can show where good locked or supervised bicycle parking is to be found, so that there is no cause to worry about theft while visiting the town.

Camping site to the left.



