

The New York Times

Riding Away From a Bar Crawl With Citi Bikes



It started as a normal date night: Shawn, a bearded graduate student who favors lumberjack plaid, went to Williamsburg for dinner and drinks with his girlfriend. But instead of taking the L train from their Chelsea apartment, they decided to ride Citi Bikes there and back.

[Citi Bike](#), the city's newest form of public transportation, is colliding with one of the city's favorite pastimes: bar hopping. While ridership peaks during the day (for commuting to work, running errands and sightseeing), some New Yorkers are beginning to see it as a convenient way to explore the city's night life, despite the obvious pitfalls of getting behind those handlebars after a drink or two.

For bar crawlers on a budget, the bike-share system beats paying for a cab; rides under 45 minutes are complimentary to members who pay a \$95 annual fee. It's also better than sweating on a subway platform and woozily waiting for a train after a night of partying. This is especially true now, when late summer breezes make cycling almost bucolic.

But is it illegal? Technically, no. While cycling under the influence is not explicitly against the law in New York City, a drunk rider can be charged with disorderly conduct or reckless endangerment, just as a pedestrian can.

Meanwhile, personal injury lawyers are on standby. **Daniel Flanzig**, a lawyer who focuses on **New York-area bike accidents**, said last month that he was "absolutely amazed" that he had not had a single case involving the bike-share program. *"My phone rings three or four times a week with a private bike crash, but nothing involving Citi Bike,"* he said. He has since been approached by a Citi Bike rider who was hit by a cab; the rider was not drunk. But, **Mr. Flanzig** added, *"it's probably inevitable that there's going to be a Citi Bike crash involving alcohol."*