

Bicycle Safety

Bicycle riding is fun, healthy, and a great way to be independent. But it is important to remember that a bicycle is not a toy; it's a vehicle! Be cool – follow some basic safety tips when you ride. Learning and obeying all traffic laws is also an important aspect of bicycle safety.

Safe Riding Tips

Before using your bicycle, make sure it is ready to ride. You should always inspect your bike to make sure all parts are secure and working properly.

Remember to:

- **Wear a Properly Fitted Bicycle Helmet.** Protect your brain, save your life.
- **Adjust Your Bicycle to Fit.** Stand over your bicycle. There should be 1 to 2 inches between you and the top tube (bar) if using a road bike and 3 to 4 inches if a mountain bicycle. The seat should be level front to back. The seat height should be adjusted to allow a slight bend at the knee when the leg is fully extended. The handlebar height should be at the same level with the seat.
- **Check Your Equipment.** Before riding, inflate tires properly and check that your brakes work.
- **See and Be Seen.** Whether daytime, dawn, dusk, foul weather, or at night, you need to be seen by others. Always wear neon, fluorescent, or other bright colors when riding day or night. Also wear something that reflects light, such as reflective tape or markings, or flashing lights. Remember, just because you can see a driver doesn't mean the driver can see you.
- **Control Your Bicycle.** Always ride with at least one hand on the handlebars. Carry books and other items in a bicycle carrier or backpack.
- **Watch for and Avoid Road Hazards.** Be on the lookout for hazards such as potholes, broken glass, gravel, puddles, leaves and dogs. All these hazards can cause a crash.
- **Avoid Riding at Night.** It is far more dangerous to ride at night than during the day because you are harder for others to see. If you have to ride at night, wear something that makes you more easily seen by others. Make sure you have reflectors on the front and rear of your bicycle in addition to reflectors on your tires, so others can see you.

Rules of the Road – Bicycling on the Road

When riding, always:

- **Go With the Traffic Flow.** Ride on the right in the same direction as other vehicles. Go with the flow – not against it.
- **Obey All Traffic Laws.** A bicycle is a vehicle and you're a driver. When you ride in the street, obey all traffic signs, signals and lane markings.
- **Yield to Traffic When Appropriate.** Slow down and look to see if the way is clear before proceeding. Yield to pedestrians.
- **Be Predictable.** Ride in a straight line, not in and out of cars. Signal your moves to others.

- Stay Alert at All Times. Use your eyes AND ears. Watch out for potholes, cracks, wet leaves, storm grates, railroad tracks or anything that could make you lose control of your bike. You need your ears to hear traffic and avoid dangerous situations; don't wear a headset when you ride.
- Look Before Turning. When turning left or right, always look behind you for a break in traffic, then signal before making the turn. Watch for left- or right-turning traffic.
- Watch for Parked Cars. Ride far enough out from the curb to avoid the unexpected from parked cars (like doors opening, or cars pulling out).
- Enter a street at a corner and not between parked cars. Alert pedestrians that you are near by saying, "Excuse me," or "Passing on your left," or use a bell or horn.

For more information on bicycle safety, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Web site at: www.nhtsa.dot.gov

