

Bicycle Safety

A bicycle is more than a means of basic transportation. Riding can be fun, exciting, and a great way to exercise. Remember though, when you ride, you're not alone! You share the road with cars, trucks, pedestrians, and other cyclists. Accidents are the quickest way to turn a bicycle adventure into a bicycling tragedy. Here are some tips to help make your ride a safe and enjoyable one.

Protect Your Head - Wear a helmet

Wear a helmet! Studies have shown that using a bicycle helmet can reduce the chance of head injuries by up to 85%. Select a helmet that has a snug, but is comfortable fit. Look for the helmet labels that show they are recommended by either the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or the Snell Memorial Foundation.

See and Be Seen - Wear proper clothing

Wear proper clothing for riding. Clothing should be light in color so that you are easily visible to others around you, and close fitting to avoid being caught in the bicycle's moving parts. Also, be sure that books and other loose items are secured to the bike, or are carried in a backpack.

The Safe Way Is The Right Way

Go with the flow of traffic; ride on the right side of the road. You must obey the rules of the road when you ride. This includes traffic signs, signals, and road markings. The safe way to ride is in single file. Don't weave from lane to lane or tailgate to hitch rides on moving vehicles. Learn and use proper hand signals.

Look ALL Ways

Be aware of traffic around you. 7 out of 10 car-bicycle crashes occur at driveways or other intersections. Check for traffic---always look left-right-left. Walk your bicycle across busy streets at corners; use crosswalks when possible.

Stay Alert

Keep a look-out for obstacles in your path. Watch out for potholes, sewer gratings, cracks, railroad tracks, loose gravel, and broken glass. Before going around an object, look ahead and behind you for a gap in traffic. Plan your move, and signal your intentions. Be especially careful in wet weather; water can make you slide, and make your brakes work improperly.

Beware of the Dark Side

Be cautious when biking at night. If you have to ride at night, display front and rear reflectors on your bicycle. Wear light colored clothing and reflective markings or materials, especially on your ankles, wrists, back, and helmet. Ride in areas that are familiar, and on streets that are brightly lighted.

Off-Road Biking

Follow designated bike routes where available. Bicycles routes are marked by special signs or lines, and are reserved for cyclists. Become familiar with such places in your area. Don't forget, courtesy rules for the road apply to bike paths too!



Fix It Up

Make sure your bicycle is adjusted properly for you. Before using your bike, check to make sure that all parts are secured and working. The handlebars should be firmly in place and turn easily; the wheels should be straight and secured. You should always check all parts of your bicycle after a fall, or after transporting it. Make sure the tires are properly inflated.

Stop It

Check your brakes before riding. When using hand brakes, apply the rear brake slightly before the front brake. Remember to ride slowly in wet weather; roadways may be slippery and your brakes will have less friction to stop the bicycle. It's important to apply brakes earlier in wet weather since it takes more distance to stop.

Lock It!!

Protect your bicycle from theft. A bicycle can be stolen from just about any place at any time. But simple precautions can deter would-be bike thieves. One thing that most stolen bikes have in common is that they were not locked-up. Always lock your bicycle securely, whether you're gone for a few minutes or a few hours. Use a U-lock, securing both wheels and the frame to a stationary object such as a post, fence, tree, or bike rack. For extra security, add a chain or cable with a good padlock. Record the serial number of your bicycle and keep it with the sales receipt and a photograph of the bike. Mark your bicycle with an engraver to deter thieves and to help the police in identifying and returning a stolen bike to the rightful owner. Use a unique number such as your social security number or driver's license number.