

Bicycle Safety








Tips for Youth




Bicycling is fun, healthy, and a great way to be independent. But it's important to remember that a bicycle is not a toy; it's a vehicle! So DRIVE your bicycle and follow these tips.

Safe Riding Tips

Before riding, make sure you and your bicycle are ready to ride. Remember to:

-  **Wear a Properly Fitted Bicycle Helmet.** Protect your brain, save your life. For more information see the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration publication “Easy Steps to Properly Fit a Bicycle Helmet.”
-  **Adjust Your Bicycle to Fit.** Stand over your bicycle. There should be 1 to 2 inches between the rider and the top tube (bar) if using a road bike and 3 to 4 inches if using 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 the brakes work.
-  **See and Be Seen.** Whether daytime, dawn, dusk, foul weather, or at night. Wear neon, fluorescent or other bright colors when riding, to make yourselves the most visible to others. 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.** Ride with two hands on the handlebars unless signaling a turn. Place 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. If you are riding with friends and you are in the lead, yell out and point to the hazard to alert the riders behind you.
-  **Avoid Riding at Night.** It is harder for other road users to see bicyclists at dusk, dawn or nighttime. Use reflectors on the front and rear of the bicycle. White lights and red rear reflectors or lights are required by law in many States.










Many bicycle-related crashes resulting in injury or death are associated with the bicyclist's behavior, **including such things as not wearing a bicycle helmet, riding into a street without stopping,  ing left or swerving into traffic that is coming from behind, running a stop sign, and riding the wrong way in traffic. To maximize your safety, always wear a helmet AND follow the rules of the road.**

Rules of the Road – Bicycling on the Road








Bicycles in many States are considered vehicles, and cyclists have the same rights and the same responsibilities to follow the rules of the road as motorists. 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.** Almost always, drivers on a smaller road must yield (wait) for traffic on a major or larger road. If there is no stop sign or traffic signal and you are coming from a smaller roadway (out of a driveway, from a sidewalk, a bike path, etc.), slow down, look for traffic, and proceed only when clear. This also means yielding to pedestrians who have already entered a crosswalk.
-  **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. Look for potholes, cracks, wet leaves, storm grates, railroad tracks, or anything that could make you lose control of your bike. Listen for 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).

Sidewalk versus Street Riding

The safest place for bicycle riding is on the street, where  ~~bicycles are expected to follow the same rules of the road as motorists and ride in the same direction.~~

-  Children younger than 10 years old, however, are not mature enough to make the decisions necessary to safely ride in the street.  ~~Therefore, they are safest riding on the sidewalk.~~
-  For anyone riding on a sidewalk:
 -  Check the law in your State or jurisdiction to make sure sidewalk riding is allowed.
 -  Watch for vehicles coming out of or turning into driveways.
 -  Stop at corners of sidewalks and streets to look for cars and to make sure the drivers see you before crossing.
 -  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 NHTSA Web site at:
www.nhtsa.gov