

Bike Safety

Bicycling is one of the most popular recreational activities in the US and one of the most popular ways to get around. Bikes come in all shapes and sizes with dozens of variations. Bicycling is an activity that appeals to all ages, and something that can be done in just about every location.

Each year more than 150 children die each year from bicycle related injuries and another 300,000 receive medical care. Of that number, nearly half have some sort of brain injury. Head injury is the leading cause of death in bicycle crashes. The single most effective safety device to prevent head or brain injury and possible death is a helmet.

Helmet use reduces the risk of bicycle related deaths and the severity of a head injury when a crash occurs. Unfortunately only 15 to 25 percent of persons riding bicycles use a helmet. A helmet is the best shield against unintentional injury.

Bicyclists must share the road with vehicles that are larger, heavier and faster than the bike they are riding. Many streets do not have designated bike lanes which mean the bicyclist is operating in the same area as the vehicle beside them. Bicyclists must know and follow the traffic rules and know the local ordinances of the city in which they are riding.

- Wear a helmet!
- Know the traffic rules. If you are riding in the road, you must stop and obey ALL traffic controls including stop signs, traffic lights, railroad crossings, etc.
- Ride single file with traffic – not against it.
- Stay as far to the right as possible – watching for car doors opening, sewer grates, soft shoulders, debris and broken glass.
- Keep a safe distance from the vehicle ahead of you.
- Make safe turns and cross intersections with care. Signal turns. Remember the other drivers do not know where you want to go.
- Before riding into traffic check both directions and over both shoulders.
- Always wear bright reflective clothing.
- Ensure your bike has the right safety equipment on it.
- When operating your bike at night ensure you have a headlight, rear reflector and possibly a rear flashing light.
- Remember that pedestrians have the right of way.
- Keep your bike properly maintained and tuned up.
- If you do a lot of bicycling, take along an emergency kit including a small first aid kit, tire patch kit, and small tool kit for repairs.
- Avoid wearing headphones or ear buds while bicycling. You may not hear emergency vehicles or other traffic noise that could put you in danger.
- Be cautious when choosing your attire – loose clothes or long coats could get caught in your pedals or wheels.

Remember – Safety is NO Accident!

Information courtesy of the Minnesota Safety Council and National Safety Council