

Bicycle riding can be an economical, enjoyable and healthy activity for people of all ages! But, it's important to remember that a bicycle is not a toy; it's a vehicle! There are rules and procedures that go along with the proper use and care of any bicycle by adults or children. The Massachusetts Safety Officers League asks you to read these statistics and safety tips! Become familiar with this information to ride safe and injury free!

Let's look at some statistics from Safekids.org.

- Bicycles are tied to more childhood injuries than any other consumer product except automobiles!
- More children ages 5 to 14 are treated in hospital emergency rooms for bicycle related injuries than in any other sport.
- More than 70 percent of children ages 5 to 14 ride a bicycle regularly. But, national estimates report that helmet use ranges from only 15 to 25 percent.
- Each year, approximately 140 children are killed while riding bicycles.
- Nearly 690 children are injured daily due to bicycle-related crashes and children sustain more than 275,000 nonfatal bicycle injuries each year.
- In 2005, there were over 251,000 bicyclist injuries.
- 69 percent of deaths occur from May to October.
- 70 percent of deaths occur between 2-8 pm.
- 58 percent of child bicyclist deaths occur at non-intersection locations.
- 53 percent of children (16 and under) are killed bicycling on minor roads compared to 46 percent killed bicycling on major high-volume roads.
- Males account for 82 percent of bicycle-related deaths and 70 percent of nonfatal child injuries.
- Children are five times more likely to be injured in a bicycle-related crash than bike riders, 15 or older.
- Studies show that bike helmet legislation is effective in increasing bicycle helmet use and reducing bike related death and injuries among children.
- Estimates say that 75 percent of fatal head injuries among child bicyclists could have been prevented with a bicycle helmet!
- Wearing a helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent and severe brain injury by 88 percent.
- One study showed that within five years of passage of a state mandatory bicycle helmet law for children ages 13 and under, bicycle-related fatalities decreased by 60 percent.
- Universal use of bicycle helmets by children ages 4 to 15 could prevent between 135 and 155 deaths, 39

to 45,000 head injuries, and between 18 and 55,000 scalp and face injuries annually.

- In the United States, every \$11 spent on a bicycle helmet generates \$570 in benefits to society.
- If 85 percent of child cyclists wore helmets every time they rode bikes for 1 year, the lifetime medical cost savings could total between \$134 and \$174 million. So, **Why NOT wear a helmet?**



Using and Maintaining the Bicycle

- Always **wear a helmet** to help prevent head injuries.
- Observe all traffic laws and signals, just as cars do.
- To be safe, don't ride double or attempt stunts.
- Ride near the curb in the same direction as traffic.
- Rather than ride through busy intersections and heavy or high-speed traffic, try to find alternate routes, or walk -- don't ride -- your bicycle across busy intersections and left turn corners.
- Avoid riding in wet weather when wet handbrakes may require a long distance to stop.
- Avoid riding in the dark. If you do, be sure the bike is equipped with a headlight, taillight and reflectors. Apply retro-reflective trim to clothing, or wear reflective vests and jackets to be seen by motorists.
- Avoid loose clothing or long coats that can catch in pedals or wheels. Leg clips or bands keep pants legs from tangling in the chain.
- Regular maintenance is essential for safe riding. Refer to the owner's manual for the manufacturer's maintenance recommendations. An experienced repair technician should do complicated work.
- Align wobbly wheels and spokes for better control.
- Replace all missing, damaged, or worn parts; for example, brake pads, chain guards, chain links, spokes, screws and bolts, handlebar grips.
- Tighten and/or adjust any loose parts.
- Periodically inspect frame, fork, spindles and other components for cracking and wear.
- Follow manufacturer's torque specifications.
- Inflate tires to recommended pressure. Replace worn tires and inspect them for signs of wear.
- Lightly oil and clean moving parts. Keep oil off rubber and rims where handbrakes contact.
- Keep your bicycle indoors when not in use. Moisture may cause rust and weaken metal parts.

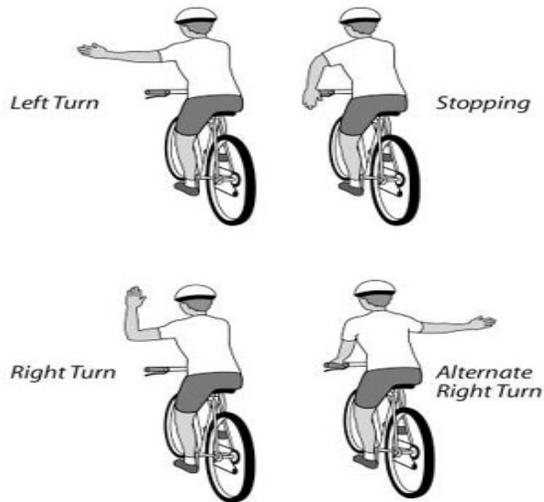
Safe Bicycle Riding Tips

- **Always check your equipment** before riding! Inspect your bike to make sure all parts are present, secure and working properly before you ride. Tire pressure, reflectors, front brakes, rear hand or foot brakes and a properly oiled chain are essential! Protect your brain, save your life!
- **Always wear a Properly Fitted Bicycle Helmet!** For more information see NHTSA publication - **“Easy Steps to Properly Fit a Bicycle Helmet.”** <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/EasyStepsWeb/index.htm>
- **Adjust Your Bicycle to Fit.** Standing over your bicycle, allow 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 and the height should be adjusted to allow a slight bend at the knee when the leg is extended. The handlebars should be at the same level as the seat.
- **See and Be Seen.** Just because you can see a driver doesn't mean the driver can see you. Fluorescent or bright colors in darkness or bad weather can make you much more visible! Also, wear something that reflects light, such as reflective tape or markings, or equip your bike with flashing lights or a front headlight! Wearing white has not been shown to make you more visible.
- **Control Your Bicycle.** Always ride with at least one hand on the handlebars. Carry other items in a bicycle carrier or backpack.
- **Watch for and Avoid Road Hazards.** Look out for hazards such as potholes, broken glass, gravel, puddles, wet leaves, sewer grates, RR Tracks 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.** At night, you are harder for others to see. Wear clothing that makes you more easily seen by others. Reflectors on the front and rear of your bicycle (white lights on the front and red rear reflectors) are required by law, in addition to reflectors on your tire spokes and foot pedals.
- **Be Responsible.** Many bicycle-related crashes resulting in injury or death are associated with the bicyclist's behavior. Not wearing a helmet, riding into a street without stopping, turning left or swerving into traffic, 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

Bicycles in many states are considered vehicles, and cyclists have the same responsibilities to follow the rules of the road as motorists. When riding, always:

- **GO WITH, NOT AGAINST, TRAFFIC FLOW!**
The same way is the right way!
- **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.** Drivers on a smaller road must yield for traffic on a larger road. If there is no stop sign or signal and you are coming from a smaller roadway, a driveway or sidewalk or bike path, you must slow down and look to see if the way is clear before proceeding and yield to pedestrians in, or about to enter crosswalks.
- Use a "**Shoulder Check**" to see traffic behind you.
- **Be Predictable.** Ride in a straight line. Ride in single file. Don't ride in and out of cars.
- Use **hand signals** to 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.** Stay far enough from the curb to avoid the unexpected car door opening up.

Sidewalk versus Street Riding

The safest place for bicycle riding is on the street, where bicyclists are expected to follow the same rules of the road as motorists. However, children less than 10 years old are not mature enough to make the necessary decisions to ride safely in the street. Children less than 10 years old are safer on the sidewalk, but,

- Check the law in your City or Town to make sure sidewalk riding is allowed.
- Watch for vehicles coming out of or turning into driveways.
- Stop at corners to look for cars and make sure the drivers see you before crossing.
- Enter a street at a corner, NOT between parked cars.
- Be polite by alerting pedestrians that you are near by saying, "Excuse me," or "Passing on your left," or use a bell or horn.

The Massachusetts Safety Officers League, First Responding Emergency Services as well as Hospital Emergency Room Personnel want you to enjoy the benefits of good health through bicycle riding! Please remember these bicycle safety tips to ensure your good health by practicing good bicycle safety!



http://kidshealth.org/kid/watch/out/bike_safety.html
<http://bicyclesafe.com/>
<http://www.adventuresportsonline.com/bikesafe.htm>
<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/healthy/physical/sports/692.html>
<http://www.massbike.org/resourcesnew/bike-law/>
<http://www.bhsi.org/mandator.htm>
<http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/safety-resources-by-risk-area/bicycling-and-skating/?gclid=COqaveHalKYCFdtx5QodjBiIoA>
www.AAA.com
http://www.be-safe.org/css_com/bicycle/
<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/>



Bicycle Safety Tips



MSOL Website

www.masafetyofficers.org

MSOL Membership
Application Website

www.masafetyofficers.org/membership.htm