

Tips on Bicycling Fun and Safety

Bike riding is fun, it's exciting, and it's a great way to explore the area where you live. You won't be alone when you are riding, however; you'll be sharing the road with vehicles of all shapes and sizes.

Bike riding should go together with bike riding safety. This pamphlet contains information that your parents should share with you so that they can also join in the fun that safe bike riding can bring.

Before You Ride

Protect Your Head...Wear a Helmet...

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

Be Seen...Wear Proper Clothes...

- Wear clothes that make you more visible. Clothing should be light in color and close-fitting to avoid being caught in the bicycle's moving parts.
- When riding after dark, you must have a front lamp that gives a white light visible for at least 500 feet, as well as a front white reflector. A rear red reflector or tail light must be visible for at least 300 feet.
- Be sure that books and other loose items are secured to the bike or are carried in a back pack.

When You Ride

Vision...

The first step in riding safely is being able to see the cars, trucks, or motorcycles that are on the road with you.

It's easy to see vehicles in front of you, but you will also have to see vehicles that are coming from behind. This means looking quickly over your left or right shoulder to see if any cars or trucks are coming. Before you ride on any busy street, practice the skill of steering straight ahead and looking over your shoulder. This will help you keep control of your bike and still see the other vehicles.

As you ride, listen for the sounds that other vehicles make as they come up from behind. By hearing these sounds early, you can more easily share the road with them.

Moving In Traffic...

Because you're riding your bike on the same roads as cars and trucks, you must obey the "Rules of the Road" like they do. Some special rules for bike riders are:

- Stay on the right side of the street, near the curb. Move with traffic and watch for parked cars turning into traffic or car doors opening suddenly.
- Ride in single file when you are with others.
- Obey all traffic signs, signals and road markings.
- Use hand signals to indicate a turn or stop.
- **Walk** your bike across all busy intersections.
- Do not carry passengers or packages. These can cause you to lose control.
- Never weave from lane to lane, or hitch a ride on moving cars, trucks or motorcycles.
- Let all pedestrians, cars, or trucks go first when they are about to cross in front of you.

Bike Routes...

If you are looking for a safer way to bike around our city, you may be interested to learn about special bike routes or paths in our community.

Protection Against Theft

A bike can be stolen from just about any place, but simple precautions can deter would-be bike thieves. Remember: **Most bikes that are stolen are not locked!**

- Always lock your bike securely, whether you're gone for a few minutes, or a few hours.
- If your bike is at home, kept it in a locked garage, or locked securely to a post, tree, or other object. Don't leave it unsecured in the yard or driveway.
- What kind of lock should you use? Use a *U-lock*, securing both wheels and the frame to a stationary object, like a post, fence, tree, or bike rack.

Or, you can use a high quality lock and a case-hardened chain or cable, placing the chain through both wheels, the frame, and around a stationary object. You could even use both kinds of locks together for extra-added security.

- Record the serial number of your bike and keep it with the sales receipt and a photograph of your bike.
- Mark your bike with **Operation Identification**. This means marking it with your drivers license number, or your parent's or guardian's drivers license number if



you are too young to drive. You may borrow an engraver from the main branch of the Mesa Public Library.

Marking your bike helps protect you and serves as a deterrent to would-be bike thieves. It also helps the police in identifying and returning a found or stolen bike to the owner. Besides marking your bike, keep a record of the following information in a safe place.

- Serial number
- Operation ID number
- Owner's name
- Address (including city, state and zip code)
- Phone number
- Brand name, model, color, speeds, boys or girls, size, are there fenders, new or used, and any other descriptive information.
- Date purchased

If your bike is stolen call the police immediately. Tell them who you are, where and when the bike was stolen, and give a description of the bike.

Do...

- ...**wear a helmet and protective gear.**
- ...ride with traffic. Keep to the right of the road.
- ...obey all traffic regulations.
- ...use proper hand signals for turning or stopping.
- ...stop and look both ways in order to make sure that sidewalks are clear before entering.
- ...use proper headlights and red tail lights or reflectors when riding at night.
- ...walk your bicycle across busy streets at corners or crosswalks.

Don't...

- ...show off. Keep your hands on the handle bars.
- ...zig zag, race, or stunt ride in traffic.
- ...hitch rides on trucks or cars.
- ...carry passengers.
- ...carry large packages which could get in your way (use luggage carrier or basket).
- ...ride against traffic.
- ...wear dark clothing at night. Wear reflective clothing and light colors.
- ...tailgate or ride too closely to other vehicles.

Accidents involving bicycles are steadily increasing. Major streets are the most dangerous. The peak traffic hours between 4 pm and 6 pm are the most dangerous for cyclists.



Avoid busy streets as much as possible and try to plan your biking before 4 pm.

Bike Maintenance

The fun of riding is missed if your bicycle doesn't work right. Check your tires daily for air pressure and wear. Making sure the handle bars, saddle, and pedals are tight can prevent a fall. Lubricate the chain and wheels often. Ask your parents or a qualified bike mechanic to help you keep your bike in top condition.