



Bicycle Safety Tips

Whether for recreation or as a mode of transportation, bicycling can be a safe and enjoyable activity for riders of all ages. Riders should respect the rules of the road and keep a safety conscious attitude. By law, cyclists have the same rights and duties as vehicle operators. The same rules of right-of-way, traffic signs and signals, apply to cyclists.

Protect and Prepare Yourself Before Cycling

- Ensure your bicycle is operating properly: ensure brakes are strong enough for a quick stop. Tires should be inflated to recommended pressure; lights and reflectors should be installed for when cycling in the evening or bad weather. Make sure bike is the right size and adjusted to fit individuals properly. Perform regular maintenance and safety checks.
- Consider accessories for emergencies and increased safety. Avoid hanging bags or loose loads on handle bars, this can affect the control and steering of a bike - saddle bags allow you to comfortably and safely carry a load while keeping your hands on the handlebars. A bell is useful to warn and alert pedestrians or other trail users of your approach. A basic bicycle toolkit, pump and mini first-aid kit come in handy for roadside emergencies. Mirrors can assist in seeing traffic in front and behind the rider.
- Helmets are the law. Ensure you have a properly fitted helmet, certified to CSA, ANSI, ASTM, or SNELL standards. Hockey or other types of sports helmets are not legal for cycling.
- Consider weather and duration of a ride. Be visible, wear brightly coloured clothing or a safety vest. Plan routes that avoid obstacles or hazards. Avoid high volume traffic or high-speed roads.

Tips for Drivers

The top two contributing factors in motor vehicle accidents involving cyclists are one distracted driving and two failing to yield the right-of-way

- Do not become distracted. Watch for cyclists on the road and make eye contact if you can, so they can anticipate sudden or planned moves.
- Shoulder check for cyclists before turning right and watch for oncoming cyclists before turning left.
- Yield to cyclists and signal well in advance when crossing a designated bike lane or when pulling over.
- Keep a safe distance (at least three seconds) behind cyclists. Make room (at least one metre) when passing a cyclist to avoid the risk of side-swiping or running a cyclist off the road.
- Scan for cyclists before entering the roadway from an alley or when entering or exiting a parking lot.
- Open doors can be dangerous. It is important drivers and passengers shoulder check for cyclists before opening doors.

Safe Cycling

- Look up when riding and look one and a half to two blocks forward. Anticipate behaviour and movements of others on the road. Make eye contact with other road users. Make hand signals well in advance of any turn. Do not cycle beyond your confidence level. Do not wear headphones while cycling.
- Be aware of hazards. Be aware of traffic emerging from driveways. Drivers of large vehicles, such as trucks and buses, have blind spots and may be unable to see cyclists, if you cannot see the driver in the mirror, they cannot see you - avoid riding in blind spots and be prepared for wide turns. Cross railway tracks carefully – watch for uneven pavement and grooves that can catch wheels. Cycle at least one metre away from parked vehicles to avoid being hit by an opening door or a vehicle pulling out from the curb.
- The law requires traffic moving less than the normal speed of traffic to keep to the right hand curb or edge of the roadway. Cyclist may choose to take the whole lane by riding in the centre of it if there is no bike lane and the curb lane is narrow – this may be safer than riding near the curb, which may encourage motorist to squeeze in where there is not enough room.
- It is against the law to ride on sidewalks and in crosswalks.

Preventing Bicycle Theft

A bike is stolen every 30 seconds.

- Invest in a good quality lock. Avoid cable locks, which can be easily removed with wire cutters. Chain and U-locks offer better protection. Always lock bikes up, no matter how long you will be gone or where it is parked.
- Learn the best way to secure your bike. Park with other bikes – bikes do not need to be impossible to steal, just more difficult to steal than other bikes. Do not forget to lock your wheels and saddle.
- Record the bicycle's serial number upon purchase – engrave your driver's license on the frame to assist in returning the bike to you if it is found. Many local police departments have bicycle registry or identification programs. If your bicycle is stolen, report it to the police.

Resources

British Columbia Cycling Coalition: www.bccc.bc.ca

Cycling Canada's CAN-BIKE program: www.canbikecanada.ca

529 Garage community-based bike registry: www.project529.com