



# Bicycle Safety Fact Sheet

A bicycle is not a toy, it is a child's first vehicle! It may not have an engine but it does rely on power, human power. Bicyclists of all ages compete with all kinds of traffic and due to the size and speed of the bicycle, there is great risk to the rider.

Let's take a look at some things that can be done to reduce the risk and ensure safety and fun when bicycling.



The **bicycle**, like any other vehicle, needs to be in tip top condition and "**fit**" the rider. Make sure your bike is the proper size. A bike that is too big or too small will be hard to control.

- ✓ *For Fit:* When standing on the ground there should be a 1-3 inch gap between the child and the top bar. More room will be needed for a mountain bike.
- ✓ *Bike Seat:* Is it adjusted to the proper height? When sitting on the seat with the foot on the pedal, the leg should be slightly bent.
- ✓ *For Reflectors:* Reflectors should be on the front and rear of a bike. The rear should be red and should be at least three inches across. Check that the reflector is pointed straight back to reflect the headlights of cars that are coming from the rear. The front reflector is usually standard on new bicycles and it should be white, most new ones are round and 2 inches wide.
- ✓ *Bike Chain:* The chain should be clean and lubricated. If it's not, take it to the local bike shop for a check up.
- ✓ *The Brakes:* Brakes should have even pressure. They should make the back wheels skid on dry pavement, but should not stick.
- ✓ *The Tires:* Tires need to be properly inflated. The side of the tire has the manufacturer's guidelines. Use a tire pressure gauge to test for inflation.



It is always cool to wear the right kind of **clothes** for the activity. Riders need to see and to be seen!

- ★ Fluorescent green, yellow or orange are all great colors. When wearing these colors, other bikers, motorists and pedestrians will be able to see the bicyclist better in the daytime.
- ★ If one must ride at night (which is not recommend for anyone), clothing made with retro-reflective materials is recommended. Retro-reflective tape may also be sewn onto clothing. And do not forget a light source, like a headlamp.
- ★ Roll up, clip or tuck the legs of loose clothing into socks so they won't get caught in the bicycle chain or pedals.
- ★ Tie shoelaces and tuck the ends into shoes so they don't get caught in your chain. Secure book bag and its straps so that they do not catch in the wheels of the bike. Always wear appropriate shoes, never ever ride barefoot, in slippers, or in flip-flops.

Last but not least –**Wear a helmet!** Helmets can prevent head injuries-the main cause of death and disability. They make it easier for motorists to see a bicyclist. A helmet is as much a part of the bicycle as the handlebars and tires. Don't ride without it!

## Safe Riders of Texas offers the following helmet tips:

- Choose a safety-certified helmet—the helmet should be certified to meet CPSC safety standards
- Measure for proper fit—measure around the child’s head about 1 inch above the eyebrows. Select a helmet with a size range that includes the child’s head size.
- Wear a helmet straight and level—the helmet must rest straight on the top of the head. The rim of the helmet should be level from front to back. It should be worn low on the forehead, just above the eyebrows.
- Adjust the helmet for a snug fit—to be effective, a helmet should fit snugly. Most new helmets include extra foam pads of different thicknesses that can be used to adjust the size to fit a child’s head.
- Always buckle the strap under the chin—the chin strap should be buckled on every ride.
- Replace a helmet after a crash—crash impacts crush some of the bicycle-helmet foam. Even though the damage may not be visible, replace a helmet after a crash.

**Put the child’s name and phone number inside the helmet  
in case it gets lost or the child is involved in a crash.**

Everyone that drives or rides a vehicle must obey the rules-of-the-road. Parents can model good road behavior and when improper behavior is observed, point it out. When riding a bicycle or driving a car, parents can follow the rules-of-the road and set a good example.

Some rules-of-the-road are:

- ✓ Before entering a street from a sidewalk or driveway, **STOP**. Look left, right and left again. Go only when it is safe.
- ✓ Ride on the right side of the road with traffic, **NEVER** against it.
- ✓ Ride 2-3 feet from the curb and **WATCH** for car doors being opened-don’t get hit.
- ✓ Stop at **ALL** red and yellow lights.
- ✓ Stop when a school bus has **FLASHING** red lights.
- ✓ Ride in a straight **LINE**, never weave in and out of traffic.
- ✓ Make correct hand **SIGNALS** before stopping or turning.
- ✓ Watch out for cars coming out of **DRIVEWAYS** and parking spaces.
- ✓ Never, ever hitch a ride by holding onto another **VEHICLE!**
- ✓ If a **SIREN** is going off, stop at the side of road, get off the bicycle and wait until the emergency vehicle has passed.

### Review:

All kinds of people ride all kinds of bicycles all over the world. A bicycle is a vehicle and the following are important facts to remember:



The bike needs to be in top condition and fit the rider



Wear the proper clothing



Always correctly wear a bicycle helmet



Follow the rules of the road

