



## Get the Facts: Bicycle Safety and Helmet Best Practices

### In a Nutshell

Follow vehicle rules of the road and wear a helmet.

### What should I know about bicycle safety?

Bicycling is an increasingly popular form of transportation and recreation for those of all ages, but it also comes with risk. Bicycles are considered vehicles – just like a car or truck – and must follow the same rules.

### Know your rules of the road

- Stay to the right and ride with traffic.
- Stop at all stop signs, red lights and yield signs.
- Use appropriate hand signals when turning and stopping. Look behind before turning across traffic lanes.
- Pedestrians always have the right of way.
- Don't assume motorists can see you.
- Avoid riding at night if possible. If you must ride, make sure you're visible and add reflective material to your clothing, along with front and rear lights. Reflectors alone are not adequate for a motorist to see a cyclist.
- Keep your bike properly maintained. Have it checked by a competent bike mechanic at least once a year.
- Wear a properly fitted helmet. A helmet should ride level on the head and not move. If a helmet moves when worn, adjust side and chin straps and twist the dial turn ring or add sizing pads to prevent the helmet from sliding. Double check the helmet before every ride. The helmet should be approved by the Snell Memorial Foundation (SNELL) or American Society for Testing and

*Minnesota recorded 471 bicycle crashes in 2020, with 10 deaths and 429 injuries; eight died in 2021 crashes.*

*In 2020, the top bicyclist attributed crash causes were:*

- *Failure to yield right-of-way*
- *Failure to obey traffic signs/signals/officer*
- *Other human factors*
- *Darting/dashing across road*
- *Wrong-way riding*





Materials (ASTM), certifying that it is safe for cyclists. All helmets must also be approved by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

- Avoid wearing headphones while bicycling. They can limit your ability to hear traffic noise.

### **Bike helmet myths**

- *Myth: It doesn't matter what kind of helmet I wear.*

**Truth:** An ASTM, SNELL or CPSC approved helmet has passed crash testing, certifying it will protect the bicyclist in the event of a crash. Don't wear a helmet that hasn't passed the standards.

- *Myth: Only children need to wear helmets.*

**Truth:** Anyone can be seriously hurt in a bicycle crash, especially adults who are often riding at faster speeds on busy roads. Adults are role models for children. Always wear a helmet no matter how old you are.

- *Myth: I ride mostly on paths or trails, so do I need to wear a helmet?*

**Truth:** Most crashes occur on paths and trails. Often, there are people with children, strollers, pets, in-line skaters or other bicyclists riding slower or faster than you on the same path (which is usually 8' or less in width).

### **Sources:**

National Safety Council

Safe Kids Worldwide

Minnesota Community Bicycle Safety Project,

University of Minnesota

