

Sidewalks, Shared Pathways and Trails

Generally, sidewalks are reserved for the use of pedestrians and young children just learning to bicycle. Familiarize yourself with your community's rules and follow them.

Remember, on shared pathways, keep your speed down and warn pedestrians and other cyclists when you're going to pass. As you approach a pedestrian from behind, calmly say something like "passing on your left" or "excuse me," or ring your bell.

Appropriate trail use depends on both the trail design and the number of other users. If your speed or style endangers others, check for alternate routes better suited to your needs. Selecting the right location is the key to safe and enjoyable trail use for everyone.

In-Line Skaters

New York State considers in-line skaters to have the same rights and responsibilities as cyclists. All of the information, safety tips, and regulations apply to in-line skaters. Please, always wear safety gear including a helmet.

In-line skaters under the age of 14 are required to wear approved bicycle helmets.

For further information:

General:

NYS Governor's Traffic Safety Committee

Ask for the "Sharing the Road Safely" brochure

Empire State Plaza
Swan Street Building, Room 414
Albany, NY 12228
Phone: (518) 474-5777 Fax: (518)473-6946

NYS Department of Transportation

Bicycling Hotline 1 - 888 - BIKE-NYS
Pedestrian Hotline 1 - 888 - WALK-NYS

Local:

Contact your county Cornell Cooperative Extension association.

Developed by the
NYS 4-H Bicycle Safety Education Program
Department of Biological and Environmental
Engineering
Riley-Robb Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
Phone: (607) 255-2498 Fax: (607) 255-4080
Web: www.bike.cornell.edu

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Tips for cyclists

With 90 million Americans currently taking to two wheels, bicycles are a part of our daily life.

If you have the urge to get out and try it, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

BE SAFE

The most important part of safe bicycling is predictability. The same New York State Vehicle and Traffic Laws that apply when driving a car apply when cycling. When you're on a bicycle, you're part of vehicular traffic. Cyclists fare best when they act and are treated like drivers of vehicles.

Drive your bicycle with traffic, not against it. Riding on the left-hand side of the road - which is illegal - is a common cause of crashes. It puts you in an unexpected and unpredictable position for other road users.

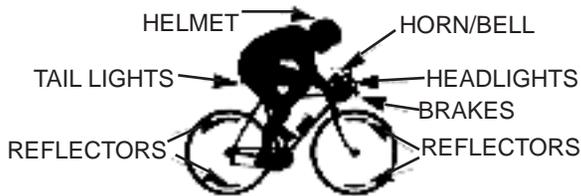
If there is a usable bicycle lane, you must use it. If there is no lane, or it is unusable due to parked cars or other hazards, ride on the right shoulder or near the right edge or curb of the roadway. Choose a lane position as far to the right as practicable and travel in a straight line. Don't weave in and out of parked cars. Leave enough room on your right to avoid car doors and to steer around obstacles. Avoid undue interference with other traffic.

Look behind you and use proper hand signals before making turns or lane changes. For turns at intersections, travel in the right most lane that goes to your destination. Come to a full stop at all stop signs and obey traffic signals.

Don't use crosswalks to get through intersections unless you dismount and walk your bike.

BE SMART

t In New York State all bicyclists under the age of fourteen are required to wear approved helmets when they are operators or passengers on bicycles. It is highly recommended, however, that **all** bicyclists and in-line skaters wear properly fitted helmets. While nobody expects to crash with a bicycle, in time, the laws of probability say you will. When you do, you must have head protection. Approximately 75% of all serious bicycle injuries are head injuries. Road rash and broken bones heal; brain damage is often permanent. Wearing a bike helmet is common sense.



t Check and maintain your bicycle regularly. Make sure all nuts and bolts are tight and the tires are properly inflated. Your brakes **must** work. A bell is also required by law.

If you're not into bike maintenance, most bicycle retailers offer checkups for a modest fee.

t Deter theft by registering your bicycle and locking it when you leave it. Securely lock the front wheel, rear wheel, and frame to a stationary bike rack. U-shaped locks provide the most protection. Locks should be a minimum 5/16" case-hardened steel shackle with double-locking mechanism heel to toe. A heavy duty cable is second best. If your bicycle is stolen, you should immediately report the theft to the appropriate law enforcement agency.



BE SEEN

t Bright-colored clothing and helmets help make you more visible. Reflective clothing makes you easier to see at night.

t Many bike crashes happen at night or dusk with the cyclist not having lights or reflective clothing. If you choose to ride at night remember, a headlight, taillight, and reflectors are vital to your safety and required by law.

BE AWARE

t Make eye contact with motorists. Motorists often find it difficult to see bicyclists. If you're in doubt of a motorist's intentions, be prepared to yield. Control your speed; watch for approaching vehicles turning left into your path. This is a common type of crash and can usually be avoided by an aware cyclist. When approaching an intersection, move into the lane of traffic to proceed legally and be more visible to cars from all directions. Signal your intentions.

t Scan the road for hazards such as potholes and drainage grates. Identify hazards in time and learn to avoid them without swerving into traffic.

t Use caution when riding near buses. Never pass on the right, as you may get caught in the squeeze with the curb, or collide with passengers getting off the bus. Keep a safe distance behind the bus. Bus drivers are constantly scanning the roadway for hazards, but you may be in their blind spot if you're too close.